

CASTLEVANIA

BY

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Crystal Sky

IMPACT PICTURES

Crystal Sky

LOVE IS IMMORTAL ...

CLOSE ON AN EYE --

Glazed and unmoving. PULL BACK to reveal the face of a German soldier. Regular Wehrmacht. His face frozen in the rictus of death. As THE CAMERA continues to pull back, it reveals another soldier, then another, then yet another.

A dozen in all. Every one of them dead.

SUPER --

August 13th 1943 - Carpathian Mountains - Eastern Romania

ARIEL SHOT --

Shows the thick forest that covers the mountains. The German patrol has made a stand here. The dozen bodies are arranged in a rough circle. They must have been surrounded. The trees around the dead patrol are all blackened and charred. Scorched with flamethrowers then riddled with bullets.

OBERSCHUTZE HENGST (O.S.)

Quite a battle.

CLOSE ON --

OBERSCHUTZE (Lance Corporal) HENGST. 47, greying buzz cut. A hardened professional soldier, Hengst is a veteran of the Spanish civil war. Has been in uniform his entire adult life. Hengst surveys the battleground as behind him a platoon of WAFFEN S.S. disembark from their armored HALF-TRACKS and KETTENKRADS.

HAUPTSTURMFUHRER WEIDNER

When did it happen?

HAUPTSTURMFUHRER (Captain) WEIDNER steps from his staff car. 27, slick hair, finely creased uniform, carries an officer's baton for effect. Weidner is accustomed to demoralized enemies and easy victories. Has the arrogance of a commander who has never seen true combat.

HENGST

Recent. A day, perhaps two. No more.

WEIDNER

They were ambushed.

HENGST

No. It looks like they had time to dig in. They were prepared for the enemy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRENADIER BUCCHEIM (O.S.)
Oberschutze Hengst! Look.

GRENADIER (Private) BUCCHEIM - 35, shaven head. Buccheim has followed Hengst through many campaigns. Owes him his life. Has little respect for Weidner and barely manages to hide it.

Buccheim is examining the bodies of the dead patrol.

BUCCHEIM
(surprised)
No bullet wounds.

He's right. None of fallen Germans have been shot.

BUCCHEIM (CONT'D)
Apart from this one.

An OFFICER sits with his back against a tree. His pistol still in his mouth. He has blown his own brains out.

WEIDNER
(disgusted)
Coward.

But Buccheim is still bothered by the lack of bullet wounds.

BUCCHEIM
If they were not shot ... How did they die?

Hengst wanders into the killing zone. A full acre of charred forest. Torn apart by gunfire. Blackened by flamethrowers. After a moment --

HENGST
No enemy.
(surprised)
There are no enemy bodies.

He's right. There are no Russian bodies in the dead forest.

WEIDNER
The Russians must have taken their dead.

Hengst nods. Uncertain.

HENGST
Or ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WEIDNER

Or what?

Hengst looks at the dead German patrol and then to the extreme devastation they had unleashed around them - the forest has been torn apart with German gunfire.

HENGST

Our men hit nothing ...

EXT. THE VILLAGE DAY.

The German convoy exits the forest and pulls into a tiny village nestling in the shadow of the mountains. Barely two dozen buildings, this place is remote, isolated, seemingly trapped in time.

INT. STAFF CAR - CONTINUOUS

Hengst rides with Weidner in the staff car. Weidner stares out at the ancient houses and muddy streets in disgust.

WEIDNER

Another peasant shit hole.

But Hengst doesn't hear him. His eyes widen in surprise --

HENGST

My God.

And we PAN to reveal THE CASTLE. A mammoth construction that seems carved from the very mountain itself. Dozens of towers and layers of battlements. Its sheer size and complexity make it hard to take in at first glance. A nightmarish construction fusing Escher with William Blake.

EXT. THE VILLAGE DAY.

The convoy pulls up by the village well. Weidner and Hengst are met by a delegation of villagers. All of them men. We glimpse the women and children peering from behind shuttered windows and locked doors.

One man steps forward. MAYOR PATRESCU. In his late sixties but still physically fit.

WEIDNER

You are in charge here?

MAYOR PATRESCU

I am the Mayor commander.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WEIDNER

What is your name?

MAYOR PATRESCU

Patrescu commander.

WEIDNER

Well, Mayor Patrescu. A German patrol was butchered in the forest, barely a mile from here.

Weidner studies the Mayor for some kind of reaction. Sees nothing.

WEIDNER (CONT'D)

You know something of this?

MAYOR PATRESCU

No commander.

WEIDNER

Of course.

Weidner looks around. The village seems unchanged since the Middle Ages.

WEIDNER (CONT'D)

What is the name of this village?

MAYOR PATRESCU

Albencarth commander.

Hengst has two maps spread on the engine of the staff car. He shakes his head. He can't find it.

HENGST

This castle is on no map.

MAYOR PATRESCU

(turns to Hengst and shrugs)

I do not make the maps.

Hengst raps Mayor Patrescu on the shoulder with his baton. It's hard enough to hurt, but the Mayor is proud and tries not to show it.

WEIDNER

I'm curious.

MAYOR PATRESCU

Commander?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WEIDNER

The whole World is at war ... yet
your village is untouched.

MAYOR PATRESCU

We have been fortunate.

WEIDNER

Well...

(smiles)

That is about to change.

Suddenly Weidner's men have their guns at the ready as he
addresses the villagers --

WEIDNER (CONT'D)

Someone here knows who attacked the
men in the forest. Someone saw
something! Someone heard
something!

No one replies. The villager's eyes are downcast.

WEIDNER (CONT'D)

I will have the truth!

Still no reply. Weidner turns to Hengst.

WEIDNER (CONT'D)

Take hostages. Every tenth
villager.

HENGST

Just the men sir?

WEIDNER

Women and children Oberschutze
Hengst.

Weidner glares at Hengst. Despises his weakness.

WEIDNER (CONT'D)

Women and children.

EXT. THE CASTLE - STATUARY GARDEN DAY.

The German convoy approaches the abandoned fortress. The
soldiers herd a dozen hostages with them. Men, women and
children. Buccheim and Hengst walk ahead of the convoy,
falling under the shadow of the Castle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUCCHEIM

Who built such a place?

The road to the Castle is lined with curious STATUES. Each one is over ten feet high. Like totem poles, but fashioned from stone and carved in the Gothic style. One grotesque stone head stacked upon another. Their screaming mouths are dark, recessed holes.

Weidner steps from his staff car.

WEIDNER

(to Hengst)

Move the trucks inside. We billet here overnight.

A stone bridge connects the Castle to the Statuary Garden. It spans a deep precipice lined with jagged rocks. As Hengst waves the convoy on, the Mayor runs up to Weidner.

MAYOR PATRESCU

No-one enters the castle. No-one has ever entered the castle!

Weidner slaps him to the ground.

WEIDNER

You do not tell me what to do.

The Mayor tries to get up, then thinks better of it. Wipes blood from his lip.

WEIDNER (CONT'D)

I want to know what happened in the forest. You have till sunrise. Then we execute the hostages. One every hour.

MAYOR PATRESCU

Please commander ... we know nothing.

WEIDNER

Sunrise.

Weidner turns on his heel and walks to the Castle. As he passes Hengst he nods to the Mayor.

WEIDNER (CONT'D)

Bring him too.

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL DAY.

A LONG TUNNEL leads from the bridge to the GRAND HALL. The Hall is the heart of the castle. Wide enough to accommodate the entire German convoy, it seems to be carved from the mountain itself. Numerous staircases lead off to countless rooms and corridors.

This is the heart of the labyrinth.

HENGST

(barks orders)

Kohler, Rothe ... guard duty on the bridge. Lepel, Ferch, Klausmann, secure the prisoners. Geissler, sniper duty. And Petersen ...

Hengst stares at the great STONE FIREPLACE. Big enough for the tallest man to stand up in.

HENGST (CONT'D)

... get a fire going.

EXT. THE CASTLE DUSK.

The last remnants of the sunset fade behind the fortress walls. Outlined against the darkening sky, the Castle seems to be composed of impenetrable shadow.

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL NIGHT.

Petersen has a roaring fire going. The Germans have strung electric lights around the walls, powered by a mobile generator. Even with the artificial light however, the high vaulted ceiling still disappears into shadow.

Two guards watch over the hostages, while the rest of the Germans are trying to make themselves at home. Bucheim examines a curious pattern inlaid into the floor. A DRAGON whose long tail forms a giant SPIRAL in the centre of the room.

HENGST (O.S.)

Soup.

Bucheim looks up to see Hengst. He's holding a metal cup filled with steaming broth.

HENGST (CONT'D)

Tastes like motor oil ... but it's warm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Buccheim glances at the Dragon as he takes the cup.

BUCCHEIM
Amazing workmanship.

HENGST
(re the Dragon)
You think he's down below? On a
pile of treasure?

BUCCHEIM
(smiles)
I have found treasure here.

Buccheim reaches in his pocket and pulls something out.

CLOSE ON --

Buccheim's palm as he opens his fist to reveal - AN ORNATE
CHESS PIECE.

INT. THE CASTLE - FIREPLACE NIGHT.

Buccheim leads Hengst to a table by the giant fireplace.
Ancient, fallen tapestries lie tattered on the floor.

HENGST
(excited)
I haven't played since Belgium.

BUCCHEIM
And I haven't beaten you since
Belgium.

They settle by an ancient chess board. A few of the pieces
still lie scattered on the floor. Unlike most chess sets
however, the pieces are either BLACK or RED.

HENGST
This time will be different ...
this time, I am sober.

Buccheim picks up the RED KING. Only to see that it has been
broken in half.

BUCCHEIM
Someone was a bad loser.

As he picks the final piece off the floor, something catches
his eye --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUCCHEIM (CONT'D)

Hengst ...

Hengst follows Buccheim's gaze. Half hidden beneath a fallen tapestry - THE BARREL OF A GUN.

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON --

The gun as Hengst shows it to Weidner.

HENGST

It's Russian made.

Weidner seethes with rage.

WEIDNER

"No one enters the castle".

He turns to the hostages.

WEIDNER (CONT'D)

Get them on their feet!!

Weidner pulls out his Luger as he marches towards the hostages.

WEIDNER (CONT'D)

You have harbored Russians or insurgents. You know who killed the men in the forest.

MAYOR PATRESCU

Please commander. My people know nothing.

Without hesitation, Weidner shoots a WOMAN dead.

WEIDNER

(to the Mayor)

Lie to me again and you will be next.

CLOSE ON --

The Woman as she breathes her last. Suddenly there is a NOISE deep within the castle. Like an ancient wind, or the growl of a long dormant beast awakening.

WEIDNER (CONT'D)

The enemy are in the castle!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Soldiers run for their guns.

HENGST
Defensive positions!

Suddenly the shadows seem alive with movement.

HENGST (CONT'D)
Mark your targets!

The Germans form into a defensive circle. It can't help but echo the other patrol we saw massacred in the forest.

WEIDNER
Who are they?

Weidner pushes his Luger in the Mayor's face.

WEIDNER (CONT'D)
Russians? Resistance?

And suddenly the movement stops. A deathly silence envelops the Castle. The Germans stare into the shadow. No movement, no sound. Nothing.

WEIDNER (CONT'D)
What is it?

The Mayor seems strangely unafraid. His reply echoes around the great stone chamber --

MAYOR PATRESCU
Death.

And then it comes. A great cloud of darkness sweeping from every shadow. BATS. Thousand upon thousand of them. The Germans react in horror. Some hiding their faces, some shooting wildly, in a vain attempt to scare the creatures off.

BUCCHEIM
(screams)
Hengst!

Hengst turns to see his friend as Buccheim is FLUNG across the hall - as if a speeding car had hit him. His body impacts fifteen feet above the floor and then falls to the stone, a crumpled mess of broken bones.

HENGST
There! I see it!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

There is something moving within the seething cauldron of Bats. A dark shadow that travels with terrifying speed. Something humanoid, but not human. Hengst opens fire but a moment later he is dashed against one of the Half-Tracks. His spine broken in two. One by one the Germans are struck down. Until just one remains - Weidner.

And as quickly as the Bats arrived. They are gone.

A shadow falls over Weidner. The shadow of a man, or perhaps something larger. Weidner grovels on the stone floor. Averting his eyes in terror. Begging for mercy.

WEIDNER

Please ... please ... Oh God,
please ...

The shadow THICKENS and FALLS upon Weidner, cloaking him in darkness. On his SCREAMS we --

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LAKE DAWN.

High cliffs fall away to a dark forest lake. The water is deep and calm. A mile distant, just above the treetops, the highest spires of the Castle can be glimpsed. The villagers, all still alive, push the last of the Germans' Half-Tracks towards the cliff edge. The Mayor supervises.

MAYOR PATRESCU

Hurry!

Even the children are helping. They throw the Germans' guns and helmets into the lake.

MAYOR PATRESCU (CONT'D)

Everything! Everything! Leave no
trace.

UNDERWATER --

One of the German trucks comes to rest on the floor of the lake. In the gloom behind it we see a JUNKYARD of other vehicles. Dozens of them. Many marked with the RED STAR of the Russian Army, but also other vehicles from an earlier age (20s and 30s) and even carts and carriages from before the age of gasoline or even steam.

Whatever it is that dwells in the castle, it's been murdering people for decades. Perhaps centuries.

EXT. THE LAKE - CONTINUOUS

With a final heave, the last of the Germans' Half-Tracks plummets over the cliff edge and crashes into the dark waters below.

CLOSE ON --

The Half-Track as it sinks beneath the surface. And then something strange happens. The surface of the water begins to FREEZE before our eyes. As if winter had arrived early. But we are not moving forward in time. We are travelling back --

SUPER -

December 20th 1576

THE CAMERA continues to move across the lake, which is now fully frozen. Visible through the light snowfall, there are tiny figures moving on the far shore.

As we draw closer, we see that they are three horsemen.

EXT. LAKESHORE DAY.

Three ROMANIAN KNIGHTS ride through the flurries of snow. They are at full gallop, pennants snapping in the wind. Their horses are flecked with foam from the hard ride. Their armor (a mixture of plate, chain and leather) is dented from years of hard combat.

These are professional soldiers. Real warriors.

Their leader pulls up by a frozen pathway - one that heads away from the lakeshore and into the depths of the woods. He pulls off his helmet to reveal a mane of dirty, matted blond hair. LORD SIMON BELMONT is surprisingly young, but already a hardened survivor - forged in the crucible of battle.

SIMON

How much further?

CRISTOFOR

According to the map, a league, perhaps two.

CRISTOFOR BELMONT is Simon's younger brother by five years. Dashing handsome, he is a favorite amongst the ladies of the camp. The brothers have grown up together in war.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But without Simon's responsibilities as clan leader, Cristofor is reckless where his brother is brave. Foolhardy when his brother is considered.

SIMON

Good. We press on.

VLAS

(concerned)

Lord.

Simon's MASTER AT ARMS is a giant MOORISH WARRIOR who goes by the unlikely name of VLAS. Early sixties, his leathery skin a patchwork of scars, Vlas serves Simon Belmont just as he served his father. He is the closest the Belmonts have to real family.

VLAS (CONT'D)

These are dangerous lands. We should wait for the wagons ... the rest of the men.

SIMON

The Turks will not wait for the wagons. And neither will I.

With that he spurs on his horse and disappears into the woods. Cristofor and Vlas are left in his dust.

CRISTOFOR

My brother will not wait for the wagons.

Cristofor laughs and urges his horse on, chasing his brother. Vlas grimaces (he's used to this), then follows at a gallop.

EXT. CARPATHIAN FOREST DAY.

In the depths of the forest it is as dark as night.

CLOSE ON -- hoofprints in the soft earth. Vlas rises from examining them.

VLAS

Turkish patrol. Twenty strong.

SIMON

Recent?

VLAS

More than an hour. Less than a day.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRISTOFOR

Their main force will be close behind.

SIMON

We must make the village before sunset ...

Simon is interrupted by a distant noise. The sound of battle up ahead. Simon's hand tightens on the hilt of his sword.

EXT. CARPATHIAN FOREST - CROSSROADS DAY.

Two winding paths intersect at the heart of the forest. Down one races a GYPSY CART drawn by two terrified horses. They are travelling dangerously fast for the narrow path, but still their DRIVER whips them on. After a moment, the reason becomes clear. Following close behind the cart is a pack of GREY WOLVES. Twenty strong. Teeth bared. Hungry for flesh.

EXT. CART - CONTINUOUS

A young man, LUCA, takes aim at the wolves with a short bow. He lets an arrow fly and a wolf goes down. But the others surge over its body in pursuit.

LUCA

Arrows.

AURICA

Last one.

AURICA is a rare gypsy beauty. In her late twenties, but with eyes that suggest a lifetime of experience. As she hands Luca the last arrow, the cart hits a RUT in the road. The cart BUCKS and Luca loses his footing. Aurica reaches for him, but too late. Luca falls.

AURICA (CONT'D)

Luca!

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - CONTINUOUS

Luca lies stunned for a moment. He recovers just as the wave of wolves break over him. Luca is submerged by the pack. They are tearing him limb from limb. He reaches out in agony and then suddenly his screaming stops.

Luca has been shot dead in the heart.

EXT. CART - CONTINUOUS

Aurica lowers the short bow. The last arrow is spent, but Luca is saved from an agonizing end.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

We see the speeding cart through a screen of trees. Something is tracking with it. Keeping pace. A GIANT BLACK WOLF. Twice the size of the grey wolves. Its fur dark as night. Its eyes gleaming with an unnatural intelligence.

EXT. CART - CONTINUOUS

The wolf pack is catching up. Aurica turns to the Driver.

AURICA

Faster!

Suddenly the Black Wolf leaps from the trees. A terrifying blur, it snatches the Driver from his seat. In an instant, both are gone and the speeding cart is out of control!

Aurica reaches for the reins, but in an instant the cart CRASHES into a fallen OAK TREE and TUMBLES end over end, tearing itself apart.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - MOMENTS LATER

Aurica lies amidst the remnants of the gypsy cart. Broken boxes, shattered barrels and scraps of clothing are scattered everywhere. She slowly, painfully forces herself to her knees. But already it is too late. AURICA IS SURROUNDED BY THE PACK OF WOLVES. Dozens of hungry eyes, glittering in the half light.

Most terrifying however, they make no move to attack. They just stare at her. Silently. Malevolently.

Then the pack begins to part. Making way for the giant Black Wolf. Its teeth are already stained with the blood of the cart's Driver.

CLOSE ON AURICA -- as a STILETTO blade slips from its concealed sheath and into her hand. She holds the blade in front of her, but it seems like a toothpick in contrast to the giant wolf before her. The Black Wolf stares at the blade and then Aurica.

CLOSE ON THE WOLF'S EYES -- their black depths hiding not just a terrifying intelligence, but something more.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Something ageless. Something evil.

CLOSE ON AURICA -- as her eyes begin to glaze. Her hand slowly lowers. Her grip on the blade weakening. She is being mesmerized.

The Black Wolf advances. Its jaws wide. Its foul breath playing on her face. Its breath moving strands of hair across her lips.

It is just inches from her.

Suddenly a horse crashes through the wolves! Rearing in front of Aurica. Breaking the spell. It's Simon Belmont.

Aurica recovers her senses as Simon scatters the pack before him. His warhorse kicking and rearing. His blade tearing into the wolves. Moments later he is joined by Cristofor and Vlas. As the pack scatter into the woods, Cristofor yells in delight.

CRISTOFOR

The hunt is on!

And Cristofor races into the forest in pursuit. Simon dismounts in front of Aurica.

SIMON

Are you alright?

AURICA

I think so. Thank you.

Aurica pushes her hair back from her face. Simon is clearly surprised by her beauty. After an awkward moment --

SIMON

You are bleeding.

A trickle of blood runs from her hairline.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Vlas! Bandages.

AURICA

A cut from the fall. Nothing more.

But she's clearly a little light headed. Simon takes her arm.

SIMON

Sit down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Aurica stiffens. Not used to being told what to do. After a moment Simon smiles --

SIMON (CONT'D)

Please.

The ice broken, Aurica smiles back at him and takes a seat.

EXT. CARPATHIAN FOREST DAY.

Cristofor is at full gallop - chasing a lone grey wolf through the trees. He's whooping in delight. The thrill of the hunt. The wolf darts into a gully and Cristofor follows at top speed.

Then suddenly he brings his horse to a halt.

The grey wolf has disappeared. To be replaced by the lone Black Wolf. Sitting calmly in the middle of the gully. He stares at Cristofor. Fearless.

CRISTOFOR

(amazed)

Brave sir wolf.

He reaches for his crossbow.

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)

But no match from Romanian steel.

Cristofor hefts the crossbow, but still the Black Wolf just stares at him. There is something deeply unsettling about the beast's calm gaze. Cristofor's horse whinnies. Spooked.

And then Cristofor sees them - staring silently from the trees that line the gully on both sides, glittering in the darkness - THE EYES OF A HUNDRED WOLVES.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL DAY.

Simon has a small fire going. A pot of water boils as he cleans the cut in Aurica's hairline.

SIMON

Warm water and pepper root to prevent infection.

AURICA

You dress a wound like a woman.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMON

In war, women are often in short supply.

(smiles)

A man must learn to fend for himself.

Aurica smiles back at him.

VLAS

SIRE!

Vlas has heard the thunder of hooves. A moment later Cristofor races into sight like the devil himself were in pursuit.

CRISTOFOR

Brother!

Simon is on his feet in an instant.

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)

Prepare your sword!

Simon pulls Aurica to her feet as A HUNDRED WOLVES BURST FROM THE FOREST. A solid wall of razor claws and snapping jaws.

SIMON

Run!

He urges Aurica towards the fallen oak where the cart had crashed. It provides some natural cover.

SIMON (CONT'D)

To the tree ...

Cristofor is the first to reach the dead oak tree. He leaps from his horse and levels his crossbow.

CLOSE ON SIMON --

as a wolf leaps for his throat. Only to be felled by a crossbow bolt in the neck. Cristofor reloads and fires again and again. But nothing can stop the sheer number of wolves.

Vlas, Simon and Cristofor lock shields, with Aurica sheltered behind them. The wolves crash around the tree like a breaking wave. The knights have a few feet elevation thanks to the fallen oak, but can barely keep the tide at bay. In an instant their swords and shields are slick with dark wolf blood.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A fierce wolf spies a break in the shield wall and leaps at Simon's unprotected back, only to be driven back by Aurica, bloodied stiletto in hand.

CLOSE ON THE GIANT BLACK WOLF --

As he crashes into the knights. Cristofor is sent flying off the oak. He tumbles to the ground winded and defenseless. His sword lost amongst the crush of wolves. The Black Wolf leaps for his throat, tearing into Cristofor's chain mail shirt. Tossing him from side to side like a rag doll.

SIMON --

Leaps from the oak tree, plunging his sword into the Black Wolf's RIGHT HIND LEG. The Black Wolf turns, eyes blazing and SLAMS Simon against the oak.

IN QUICK SUCCESSION --

- Wolves swarm up the oak, OVERWHELMING Vlas and Aurica.
- Simon is CRUSHED against the oak.
- Cristofor is BURIED beneath the pack.

Then a dozen crossbow bolts fly, each one felling a wolf. Armored men on horseback emerge from the trees. The BELMONT PENNANT flying above them. In an instant the wolves are in full retreat. Simon, Vlas and Aurica are saved.

Simon races to his prone brother --

SIMON (CONT'D)
(concerned)
Cristofor!

Cristofor sits up. Still alive. He opens his tattered mail shirt. The Black Wolf's jaws have ripped clean through it.

CRISTOFOR
(disgusted)
French armor ...

Cristofor's throat has been bitten, TWO PUNCTURE MARKS, but the wound seems shallow. Simon examines it. A sudden look of concern flashing across his face. Off the look --

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)
(worried)
How is it?

(CONTINUED)

SIMON
(grave)
My God ...

CRISTOFOR
What?

For a moment, a concerned looking Simon doesn't reply.

Then --

SIMON
I think that wolf improved your
looks.

Simon laughs at his brother's trouble face. Cristofor looks up to see that Vlas and Aurica are also laughing at the joke.

CRISTOFOR
Damn you!

Cristofor lunges for Simon and the two brothers roll across the forest floor. Neither gaining the upper hand, but Simon still laughing his head off.

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)
Stop laughing!!!

They roll into Vlas' legs. He looks down at the brothers like they were naughty boys.

VLAS
Gentlemen ... Save a little for the
Turkish.

SIMON
Yes ...
(dusts himself off)
... Thank you Vlas.

Vlas turns to the newly arrived troop of horsemen. There are twenty in all.

VLAS
Bring up the wagons!

As the troops begin to move out, a large WOLFHOUND bounds up to greet Simon.

SIMON
Florin!

CONTINUED: (4)

The big dog jumps into Simon's arms. Its jaws are stained with wolf blood.

SIMON (CONT'D)
(delighted)
You killed a wolf!

EXT. CARPATHIAN FOREST - CONTINUOUS

From a distance, hidden in the depth of the forest, the Black Wolf watches. Its attention seems fixed on Aurica.

The Wolf backs off as the sunlight breaks through the trees. He recedes into the darkness of the forest. But as he passes out of frame, the shadow of the Wolf is cast on a tree. And for an instant the shadow of the WOLF transforms into that of a MAN.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL DAY.

Simon leads his troops and two wagons through the dense forest. Florin follows patiently at his heel. Aurica rides beside him. Vlas and Cristofor follow close behind.

SIMON
These are dangerous times to be travelling unprotected.

AURICA
We were with a larger group, travelling to Albendarth. We had been summoned for a performance. When the wolves attacked we were the only ones to escape.

SIMON
A performance?

AURICA
I was with a troupe of players ... artists and entertainers.

Vlas overhears --

VLAS
(quietly to Cristofor)
Vagabonds and thieves more like.

SIMON
The land is at war and you ...

(CONTINUED)

AURICA

... Dance.

(smiles at Simon)

Even in war there must be laughter,
joy ... love.

Hardened soldier that he is, you would swear that Simon blushes a little. The attraction between these two is clear and strong.

AURICA (CONT'D)

And what of you? You are Captain
of these men?

Vlas snorts at the impudence and ignorance of Aurica --

VLAS

Captain! He is a Lord.

AURICA

Lord?

Simon bows with a mock flourish.

SIMON

Lord Simon Belmont ... at your
service.

AURICA

Lord of where?

SIMON

Of no land in particular. We
travel, we fight.

(indicates his men)

These are my subjects ...

(taps his sword)

... this my-kingdom.

AURICA

But what of your home?

SIMON

Burnt to the ground ten years past.
Driven out by the Turks.

AURICA

And your family?

Simon hesitates for a moment.

CONTINUED: (2)

SIMON

I have no family. Other than my brother.

CRISTOFOR (O.S.)

Half brother.

He rides up alongside Aurica.

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)

That is why I don't share my brother's rustic features.

Cocky though he is, Cristofor certainly is charming.

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)

Cristofor Belmont at your disposal.
And it would be my pleasure to offer you my protection on the ride to Albencarth.

Aurica looks him over.

AURICA

(cold)

I need no man's protection.

Aurica spurs her horse and rides off. Cristofor eats her dust.

VLAS

(deadpan)

It seems my Lord knows as much of women, as he does of armor.

Simon watches Aurica up ahead.

-SIMON

Fortunate woman . . .

VLAS

My Lord?

SIMON

To be the only one to survive such an attack.

CRISTOFOR

(annoyed)

Perhaps her flesh, like her tongue, was too bitter for the wolves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Vlas and Simon exchange a look as Cristofor rides off. Vlas laughs and Simon smiles - clearly his brother is not used to rejection.

EXT. VILLAGE OF ALBENCARTH DUSK.

Simon leads his men from the forest and into the tiny village nestling in the shadow of the mountains. The place is unchanged since the last time we saw it - through the eyes of the German soldiers over 500 years in the future.

Vlas' eyes widen in surprise

VLAS

My God.

And we PAN to reveal THE CASTLE. The same giant, nightmarish construction as before, but now the vast expanse of carved stone and twisted metalwork is fresh and new.

The riders stop by the village well and are met by a delegation of villagers. All of them men. We glimpse the women and children peering from behind shuttered windows and locked doors. One man steps forward. MAYOR PATRESCU - this is exactly the same man the Germans will encounter in 500 years.

MAYOR PATRESCU

I am the Mayor of Albencarth. What is your business here?

Cristofor doesn't like the Mayor's tone --

CRISTOFOR

War is our business old man.

SIMON

Turkish raiders have entered this region. We are here to hold the village ...

(glances up at the
towering castle)

....but it seems our journey is wasted. There must be a garrison of a hundred men in such a fortress.

MAYOR PATRESCU

The castle has no garrison.

Cristofor snorts in disbelief. Clearly the Mayor is senile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRISTOFOR
Then who defends it?

MAYOR PATRESCU
My Lord protects it. And the
village.

SIMON
Alone?

Mayor Patrescu nods.

SIMON (CONT'D)
(in disbelief)
Well ... I would meet such a man.
He must put Hercules to shame.

EXT. THE CASTLE - STATUARY GARDEN DUSK.

A handful of horsemen approach the fortress, falling under the lengthening shadow of the Castle. The rest have remained in the village.

The men stare suspiciously at the STATUES that line the road - one grotesque stone head stacked upon another. Their screaming mouths dark, recessed holes.

Some of the men make the sign of the cross.

VLAS
Who would build such a place?

CRISTOFOR
And why here? The backside of the
World.

EXT. THE CASTLE - BRIDGE DUSK.

Simon leads his men across the stone bridge and into the gaping maw of the Castle.

SIMON
No guards. No gates. Why build a
fortress and leave it defenceless?

The horses seem skittish, on edge. Florin trots beside Simon's horse, his hackles raised.

A pervasive sense of DREAD hangs over the place.

EXT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL DUSK.

The same giant room the Germans had seen, only now the vast stone and marble surfaces are polished and new. A roaring wood fire fills the fireplace, but still there is no sign of life.

VLAS

My God ...

A HIGH ANGLE shows us what Vlas has seen. The giant coiled DRAGON insignia - inlaid in the floor. The black and red mosaic GLITTERS in the half light.

VLAS (CONT'D)

Dracul....

CRISTOFOR

The Dragon, here? Not possible.

VLAS

The red and the black. His colors.

Simon surveys the fortress warily. Whatever, or whoever, the Dragon is, has got them all spooked --

SIMON

Dismount. Search the place.
Carefully.

Vlas dismounts. Calms his horse. He stares at the dozens of stairways and doors that lead from the great hall.

VLAS

(to himself)

We're going to need some more
men....

INT. THE CASTLE - CORRIDOR MINUTES LATER

Vlas pushes open a door from the great hall and enters a long corridor. A dozen identical doors line each wall.

VLAS

(to himself)

A lot more men ...

INT. THE CASTLE - ARMORY

As the sun slips behind the mountains, the castle is becoming gloomier by the second. Cristofor finds himself alone in the Armory. Thousands of weapons hang from the walls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Enough to equip an army. And each blade is kept razor sharp. But where are the men to use them?

Cristofor makes his way through the room. Gripping the hilt of his own sword.

We can feel the growing tension. The sense of dread that is overtaking Cristofor. He turns suddenly, as if he were being watched. But there is no one there. Relieved for a moment, Cristofor BACKS UP and sends a rack of Sabres CRASHING to the floor.

The sound is DEAFENING. The effect TERRIFYING.

CRISTOFOR

Damn it!

Embarrassed, Cristofor gathers his wits and pushes on.

INT. THE CASTLE - STAIRWELL

Simon and Florin climb a vast Spiral Stairwell. Suddenly the hound stops, its hackles up.

SIMON

Florin! Here!

But the dog will go no further. ~~Simon~~ Simon pushes on alone. Opening a door to reveal --

EXT. THE CASTLE - BELL TOWER

The battlements are lined with STATUES of barbaric ancient warriors. In the distance, the sun is slowly dipping behind the mountains. Leaving a bloody trail through the sky. A giant BELL dominates this the highest of the castle towers. And as the sun sets, it begins to TOLL. It strikes three times. The last toll coincides with the sun disappearing behind the mountains completely.

Simon walks to the edge of the battlements and peers over. The sense of VERTIGO is immediate. Simon takes a step back and immediately SENSES something behind him. He turns in surprise, sword in hand!

Close by, what he had taken for a statue is in fact a man. Standing stock still, but his cape is ruffled by the wind.

The STRANGER has his back to Simon.

SIMON

Where did you come from?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STRANGER

I could ask the same of you.

The Stranger's voice is strong and powerful.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

After all ... this is my home.

The Stranger turns. His face is handsome, aristocratic. His body hardened, that of a warrior - VLAD DRACUL'A.

DRACUL'A

I am Dracul'a, son of Dracul and Lord of this place.

EXT. THE VILLAGE SQUARE DUSK.

Aurica helps water the horses. A SOLDIER watches her openly. Then makes his move --

SOLDIER

We've been at war a long time.
It's been a while ... since I've
seen a woman.

AURICA

I can tell.
(smiles)
Your breath is as fragrant as your
clothes.

Aurica continues with her work. The Soldier says no more. After a moment Aurica relents. Perhaps she was a little too rude ...

AURICA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I ...

She turns to see the Soldier GURGLING blood. He has an arrow through his throat.

Aurica looks to the treeline that surrounds the village. THERE IS MOVEMENT EVERYWHERE as HUNDREDS of fierce TURKISH RAIDERS emerge from the forest!

SECOND SOLDIER

The Turks!! The Turks are here!!

EXT. THE CASTLE - BATTLEMENTS

Simon watches as hundreds of savage Turks swarm the village.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRACUL'A

Bring your men to the castle. It
will protect them.

Simon races to the stairwell, sword in hand. He shouts back
at Dracul'a --

SIMON

Raise your garrison. We'll need
every sword you have.

EXT. THE VILLAGE SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Aurica watches as fighting breaks out all around. Suddenly
the Turks are everywhere. They vastly outnumber the Romanian
Knights.

VLAS

To Me!!! Rally to me!!!

Vlas is at the edge of the bridge leading to the castle.
Knights and villagers head towards him. Fighting their way
there.

EXT. THE VILLAGE - STATUARY GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Simon thunders across the bridge and into the Statuary
Garden. Crushing Turks beneath his horses' hooves. In the
midst of the battle he finds his brother --

SIMON

Cristofor! Hold them here!

CRISTOFOR

For as long as you say brother.

And with a BATTLE CRY, Cristofor spurs his horse on and
charges the Turks.

SIMON

Vlas! Fall back to the castle.
Protect the villagers. Set up
defences.

Simon spies Aurica amongst the chaos. A GIANT TURKISH RAIDER
bearing down on her defenceless back. Simon reaches for his
CROSSBOW, but before he can take a shot, Aurica ducks and
turns, deftly felling the Giant Turk. The razor thin blade
of her STILETTO slipping neatly beneath his armor. This
woman is really something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Simon rides over to find Aurica liberating the dead Turk of his GOLD PURSE. Off Simon's look --

AURICA

What?

(unapologetic)

He has no need of it.

SIMON

Neither will you if you stay here.

There are a dozen more Turks bearing down on them. Simon scoops Aurica up on his horse and spurs it back to the bridge.

EXT. THE CASTLE - BELL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Dracul'a calmly surveys the battle. He watches as Vlas and his men usher the villagers across the bridge and into the castle. But he seems particularly interested in Aurica as Simon drops her from his horse.

Only as she enters the castle does Dracul'a turn from the battlements.

INT. THE CASTLE - ENTRANCE TUNNEL

The long stone tunnel connecting the bridge to the Great Hall. Vlas looks around in frustration --

VLAS

"Set up defences"... Where the hell are the gates!

Sure enough there seems to be no gate or portcullis to seal the entrance. The Castle is wide open. Defenceless.

EXT. THE CASTLE - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Simon and a dozen men on foot hold the bridge against the advancing Turks.

SIMON

Lock shields!!

A solid SHIELD WALL blocks the bridge. A WAVE of Turks breaks against the wall, but it holds.

Suddenly the THUNDER of hooves and a horseman SOARS above the shield wall, landing on the bridge behind them. Simon turns, sword in hand, but the horseman is Cristofor. Bloodied and laughing. He was born for this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMON (CONT'D)

I thought you were holding them
back in the garden.

Cristofor smiles, discarding a piece of bloodied, broken
armor as he dismounts.

CRISTOFOR

I became lonely.

Suddenly the sound of battle diminishes.

ROMANIAN KNIGHT

They are withdrawing!!

Sure enough the Turks are pulling back.

CRISTOFOR

They have us outnumbered. Why do
they fall back?

SIMON

Spyglass!

A Knight throws him a primitive SPYGLASS. Simon puts it to
his eye and surveys the village. After a beat --

SIMON (CONT'D)

Reinforcements.

CRISTOFOR

How many?

SIMON'S P.O.V. --

There are hundreds more Turks emerging from the forest.

SIMON

Enough.

INT. THE CASTLE - ENTRANCE TUNNEL

Simon and the other Knights withdraw into the depths of the
castle. Behind them, the Turks are massing in the Statuary
Garden.

SIMON

Let's hope Vlas is prepared.

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL - MOMENTS LATER

A stack of tables and wooden chairs form a primitive (and ineffectual) barricade.

CRISTOFOR

This is it?!

VLAS

This damned place has no draw-
bridge, no gate, no portcullis.
It's not a fortress at all!

Simon stares at the feeble barricade.

SIMON

Well this won't hold them.

Outside the Turks are advancing across the bridge. The Romanian Knight are outnumbered 100 to 1.

CRISTOFOR

We are trapped in here.

Simon spies Dracul'a across the hall. He has seated himself in front of the fire. Strangely oblivious to the battle raging around him.

He seems to be playing CHESS with himself. This is the same chess board the Germans will find in 500 years. Only now, all the pieces are intact.

Simon hurries over to Dracul'a. On his way, Aurica joins him.

AURICA

We're in trouble?

SIMON

You speak Turkish?

Aurica flips the bloody stiletto in her hand.

AURICA

The last one I met understood me well enough ...

They reach Dracul'a. He is gazing at the chess pieces - still oblivious to the chaos all around. Simon keeps his voice down so as not to alarm the others --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMON

(urgent)

We need your men. Where is the garrison?

DRACUL'A

Did they not tell you in the village. There is no garrison here.

SIMON

Then we are all dead.

Dracul'a smiles.

DRACUL'A

This castle needs no man to protect it.

He catches Aurica's eye. Was he deliberately echoing her words? But how could he have known them?

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. THE CASTLE - BRIDGE

WITH THE TURKS as they surge across the bridge and into the long tunnel leading to the Grand Hall. There are over a thousand men in the charge, building up speed, a blood curdling battle cry on their lips.

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL

WITH SIMON'S KNIGHTS. Barely a dozen left. Faces grim with determination. Facing certain death. Simon joins his men behind the makeshift barricade. He glances over at his brother. Cristofor is yawning.

SIMON

Tired brother?

CRISTOFOR

(smiles)

Bored.

INT. THE CASTLE - ENTRANCE TUNNEL

The Turkish horde is just moments from the barricade. Their charge UNSTOPPABLE.

The Romanian Knights brace for impact. Prepare for death.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The first Turk LEAPS at the barricade and is IMPALED by a thick METAL SPIKE that ERUPTS from the floor. The Turk's body is SLAMMED against the ceiling of the tunnel.

A dozen more spikes emerge from the floor, each one the thickness of a man's leg. They form an impenetrable barrier, preventing entry into the Grand Hall.

The leaders of the Turkish charge are slammed up against the wall of spikes and killed outright - their bones crushed and their lungs collapsed by the weight of the men behind them.

Panic and confusion spreads through the Turkish ranks as a second wall of spikes emerges. This one at the other end of the tunnel, preventing any exit back to the bridge. Over a thousand Turks are now trapped in the stone tunnel.

And now panic turns to terror as METAL VENTS in the roof of the tunnel open and something begins to spray down onto the Turks. A thick liquid of some kind.

TURKISH WARRIOR

(Turkish - subtitled)

Oil ... It's oil!!!!

TURKISH RAIDER

(Turkish - subtitled)

Get back!! We have to get out!!

But there is no escape.

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL - CONTINUOUS

Dracul'a advances, a flaming torch in his hand. He passes Simon and the rest of the Knights. His face demonic in the torchlight. He walks with a slight limp in his right leg - exactly where the BLACK WOLF was wounded.

DRACUL'A

A single man could hold this fortress against an army of thousands.

And he hurls the torch in amongst the Turks --

INT. THE CASTLE - ENTRANCE TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

In an instant the tunnel becomes an INFERNO. Liquid fire leaping from one man to another till the entire tunnel is ablaze.

EXT. THE CASTLE - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

There are two hundred Turks still on the bridge. Seeing the fate of their comrades, they loose their nerve and RUN.

But the Castle hasn't finished with them yet.

A wall of METAL SPIKES rise from the ground, forming an impenetrable barrier at the end of the bridge. There is now no escape into the Statuary Garden, and on either side of the bridge is a sheer drop of hundreds of feet to the chasm below.

A TREMOR runs through the bridge and moments later, to the HORROR of the Turks, the bridge begins to MOVE.

The stone bridge slowly PIVOTS like a SPIT. TIPPING hundreds of men and horses off the bridge and into the chasm below. A last few try desperately to hold on, but eventually gravity takes its toll and they fall screaming to their deaths.

EXT. THE CASTLE - STATUARY GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

The remaining Turks watch ashen faced. Then they turn and run, back to the safety of the village.

They never make it.

As the Turks flee through the forest of CURIOUS STATUES, the true purpose of these stone guardians becomes clear. Each statue is over ten feet high, like totem poles, but fashioned from stone and carved in the Gothic style. One grotesque stone head stacked upon another. Their screaming mouths are dark, recessed holes.

And from these holes shoot volley after volley of STEEL DARTS. Each one sharp enough to pierce armor and stop a man dead.

In an instant, the peaceful garden becomes filled with the sounds of the dead and the dying. This too has become a terrible automated killing ground.

EXT. THE VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The last of the Turks staggers into the village. His body pierced with a dozen lethal darts. He takes one more step, then falls to the ground. Dead.

EXT. THE CASTLE - PARAPET

Simon and the others watch from a parapet overlooking the chasm and the village beyond. Below them, the bridge to the castle is slowly righting itself - having spun through a full 360 degrees. Not a single Turk is left alive.

SIMON

(in awe)

How are such things possible?

DRACUL'A

Mechanics. Science.

VLAS

Heresy.

CRISTOFOR

Such machines of death are unholy.

VLAS

The devil's work.

But Dracul'a just smiles --

DRACUL'A

Then you should thank the devil for your life.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL

The Knights clean up the aftermath of battle. Vlas sharpens his blade on a whetting stone.

AURICA (O.S.)

Sharp enough?

VLAS

Not yet.

The Moorish warrior continues with his work. Conversation over.

AURICA

You don't look like a Vlas.

Vlas sighs. Clearly this woman is not going to leave him alone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VLAS

Youseph Ibrahim Abdullah Ackbar is my name. But many here had difficulty with it.

Vlas smiles.

VLAS (CONT'D)

These Romanians are a simple people. So I chose a simple name

Aurica watches the razor sharp blade go back and forth. Or is she looking at the distinctive TATTOO MARKS on Vlas' wrists. The marks that signify him as another man's property.

VLAS (CONT'D)

Yes ... I was taken as a slave.

Aurica averts her gaze. Caught.

VLAS (CONT'D)

But not by him.

He nods to Simon. Organizing his men.

VLAS (CONT'D)

Or his father.

Vlas examines his blade. Seems satisfied.

VLAS (CONT'D)

I have been a free man many years.
I serve now out of loyalty.
Something you would know little of
I warrant.

Aurica gives him a sharp look.

VLAS (CONT'D)

I see you bear the marks too.

CLOSE ON AURICA'S WRIST --

As she hides the distinctive tattoo beneath her many gypsy bracelets. Angry that Vlas has noticed.

AURICA

Tell no one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VLAS
(shrugs)
As you wish.

He sheaths his blade.

VLAS (CONT'D)
But there is no shame in the marks
we carry on our bodies. The marks
that count are the ones we carry in
here.

Vlas taps his chest. Over his heart.

CRISTOFOR (O.S.)
Vlas!!

Vlas walks away to join Cristofor. Leaving Aurica alone.

EXT. THE LAKE NIGHT.

A torchlit procession of villagers winds its way through the forest to the lake. In an echo of what will happen to the Germans in 500 years, the villagers are throwing what remains of the Turks and their equipment into the deep lake.

From a distance Vlas and Cristofor watch.

VLAS
(suspicious)
I wonder how many bodies that lake
holds?

But Cristofor seems distracted.

VLAS (CONT'D)
What is it?

Cristofor pulls a bloodied rag away from his neck - where the Black Wolf had bitten him.

CRISTOFOR
This damn wound ... It won't stop
bleeding.

EXT. THE CASTLE NIGHT.

The castle looming against the night sky. Brooding.
Malevolent.

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL NIGHT.

Simon's men have made camp in the great hall. Just like the Germans will in 500 years time.

SIMON
I want lookouts in the village, and
guards posted on the bridge.

ROMANIAN KNIGHT
Yes my Lord.

SIMON
The men are to sleep here, but no-
one is to stray from this hall.

He looks around. Something is bothering him.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Where is Aurica?

INT. THE CASTLE - CORRIDOR

Aurica is exploring the depths of the fortress. She stops by an alcove in the wall. It contains a gold candlestick holder. Aurica removes the candle and scratches the gold with her stiletto. It's REAL. Smiling, she places it in her bag.

Suddenly a terrifying DARK SHAPE passes between THE CAMERA and Aurica. So fast that we can't make it out. Startled, Aurica stares into the darkness. White knuckles gripping her blade.

But whatever it was, it has gone.

INT. THE CASTLE - BED CHAMBER

Aurica pushes open the door to the chamber and stops in surprise. The room is opulently appointed. Fit for a Princess. Swathes of silk and priceless fabrics everywhere.

Aurica walks through this wonderland. Unsure of what to steal first. She stops at a dresser. The mirror is curiously missing, but Aurica hardly notices. Laid out on the dresser are brushes and combs made of the finest ivory, inlaid with gold and studded with jewels.

She runs a beautiful comb through her hair. Smiling. Like a little girl lost at play.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AN ANCIENT WITHERED HAND BRUSHES LIGHTLY THROUGH HER HAIR
RIGHT AFTER THE COMB HAS PASSED. BARELY TOUCHING HER HEAD.
AURICA SEEMS OBLIVIOUS TO IT.

Aurica examines the comb. Studded with rubies, it alone is
worth a king's ransom. Aurica casually slips it beneath her
robe.

Suddenly a NOISE behind her. Like the intake of breath.
Aurica turns, but there is no one there. Unsettled, she
prepares to move on, until something catches her eye. On the
other side of the bed hangs a picture, covered in a drape.

Aurica approaches it and pulls off the drape to reveal --
HERSELF. Or rather a beautiful PAINTING of herself.

DRACUL'A (O.S.)

I see you have found your room.

Aurica turns, startled, to see Dracul'a standing behind her.

AURICA

I beg your pardon. I didn't mean
to intrude.

DRACUL'A

(charming)

Intrude? But this is your chamber.

AURICA

This room? For me? That is not
possible ...

DRACUL'A

I cannot have you stay with the
soldiers. Besides, such a gem
needs a fitting setting.

AURICA

Thank you ... for your hospitality.

Aurica is taken aback, and not a little flattered.

AURICA (CONT'D)

I don't even know your name.

DRACUL'A

I am Dracul'a ... son of Dracul.

AURICA

And you are lord of this place?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DRACUL'A
And the lands beyond.

AURICA
I would never think the Lord of
such a place could be so young.

She leaving out "and handsome" but it's plain enough.
There's an immediate spark between Aurica and Dracul'a.

DRACUL'A
I believe you dropped this.

Dracul'a holds something out to her. It's the comb she had
stolen. Inexplicably now in Dracul'a's hand.

AURICA
(embarrassed)
I'm sorry. I ...

DRACUL'A
It's nothing. A mere trinket.
This castle contains a wealth far
greater.
(smiles)
Besides, everything in this room is
yours. To do with as you please.

Aurica places the comb back on the dresser.

AURICA
(still embarrassed)
In times of war, the arts are a
luxury ... a humble entertainer
must make a living however she can.

DRACUL'A
Indeed. Even by posing for
paintings?

Aurica turns to see Dracul'a now standing by her painting.
How did he get there so fast?

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)
Tell me, how much did the artist
pay you?

AURICA
Not enough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DRACUL'A

I'm sure. No price can be placed
on such beauty.

Aurica blushes. Hard to tell if she's really coy or just
acting.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

10 Dinari would be an insult.

AURICA

(shocked)

How did you know what he paid?

Dracul'a doesn't reply. He just smiles. Aurica glances at
the painting.

AURICA (CONT'D)

How did you even get it?

In the distance, in the depths of the castle, a bell tolls.

DRACUL'A

Ah ... Time to eat.

INT. THE CASTLE - DINING HALL NIGHT.

This impressive room with its high vaulted ceiling is lit by
a dozen flickering OIL LAMP CHANDELIERS. Their design is
both intricate and beautiful. Their technology, ground-
breaking. They illuminate a long oak table which easily
seats Simon and what remains of his knights. Dracul'a sits
at the head, with Aurica to his right and Simon his left.
The opulent feast is served by Mayor Patrescu and his
villagers.

The hungry knights devour roast pig, deer and pheasant,
washed down with an endless supply of wine and ale.

Simon raises his goblet in a toast --

SIMON

I must thank Lord Dracul'a for his
hospitality. And for offering us
the protection of his home.

VLAS

(quietly to Cristofor)

And the sooner we leave it the
better ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But Cristofor seems distracted. His skin pale and sweaty. He dabs at the wound on his neck. It's still bleeding.

CLOSE ON SIMON --

As he becomes aware of Florin, under the table. The dog's hackles are up.

SIMON
What is it?

The dog seems upset. Restless.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Here boy.

Simon slips the dog a leg of mutton.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Here.

But the dog won't touch the succulent meat.

SIMON (CONT'D)
What is it? Not hungry?

Simon throws Florin the meat. But the dog just growls and backs away from the hunk of tender juicy flesh.

CLOSE ON AURICA --

As she swallows a gulp of rich red wine. She smiles at Dracul'a --

AURICA
Perhaps if the Lord would indulge us, he could tell us a little of himself ... of his family.

She looks around at the immense scale of the dining hall.

AURICA (CONT'D)
How they came to build such a place.

VLAS
Yes. Tell us please.
(beat)
Tell us of the Dragon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A cold chill descends on the hall. Vlas has given voice to what everyone had been thinking. Dracul'a stares at the Knight, but Vlas refuses to look away. After a long beat --

DRACUL'A

The Dragon.

(beat)

Then I fear you know my family's story all too well.

Aurica senses the tension in the air.

AURICA

I don't understand.

CRISTOFOR

Because you are not Romanian. If you were, you would know of the Dragon.

VLAS

The Butcher of Transylvania.

Dracul'a SLAMS the table.

DRACUL'A

(furious)

That name will not be used here.

In his anger, he has spilt a goblet of wine. The DEEP RED liquid spills across the table. Dracul'a watches it and regains his composure.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

There were many lies told about my father. By the very people he fought to save.

(to the Knights)

It seems I must teach you your own history.

Dracul'a signals to Patrescu. The Mayor turns an ornate WHEEL and a hundred smaller oil lamps - like theatrical footlights - begin to illuminate the walls of the room to reveal a PICTURE GALLERY which encircles the table.

The dozens of paintings are unsettling in their intensity depicting as they do BATTLE and BETRAYAL, LOVE and DEATH - the epic, terrible story of DRACUL - "The Dragon" --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

50 years ago the Turkish threatened our borders, just as they do now. Suleiman The Magnificent was the Ottoman Pashar. Famous for his cruelty and ambition, he was hungry for Empire. His men raided deeper and deeper into our lands ...

CLOSE ON THE PAINTINGS --

In the flickering lamp light the painted figures seem to shimmer and move. As if coming to life. To illustrate Dracul'a's words --

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

The Romanian King, Radu The Weak lived up to his name. Powerless to stop the Turkish scourge he turned to his noblemen instead, creating the Order Of The Dragon. The greatest warriors of the land joined the Order. And greatest of all these was Vlad Tepes.

CLOSE ON --

the painting of Vlad Tepes. He looks almost identical to Dracul'a.

AURICA

Your father.

DRACUL'A

--Yes. My father ...

But even if Aurica believes this, we do not. The similarity between Vlad Tepes and Dracul'a is just too great. Too uncanny. This is not father and son. This is the same man.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

Vlad Tepes swiftly rose to become leader of the Order. He even took the name Dracul - "The Dragon".

And slowly the flickering figures in the paintings become LIVE ACTION and we are in a FLASHBACK narrated by Dracul'a --

FLASHBACK --

DRACUL'A (V.O.)

Vlad Dracul raised an army to lead against the Turk. Barely two thousand men and boys, what chance did they have against the mighty Suleiman, whose army was over one hundred thousand strong?

(beat)

But Vlad Dracul did the unthinkable. Rather than waiting for the Turkish to attack, he took the battle to them. For the first time ever, a Romanian army invaded the lands of the Turk....

We see the Romanian Army raiding Turkish villages. Burning the houses, stealing the livestock, taking Turkish prisoners.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

Suleiman was furious. He immediately ordered his army to attack. But this was Dracul's plan. In his haste Suleiman did not allow his army to prepare. And they left without sufficient provisions.

We see the Turkish army on the march. Filled with pomp and arrogance. A glittering unstoppable war machine, led by Suleiman himself, a slovenly fat man, carried on a GOLDEN LITTER borne by a dozen SLAVES.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

Instead of facing the Turk, Dracul withdrew, and laid waste to everything behind him. He burnt the crops, poisoned the wells, left nothing for the Turk.

The Romanian army retreats, taking their Turkish prisoners with them.

Following them, Suleiman's vast army marches on through BLACKENED FIELDS and BURNT VILLAGES. Over time, their armor becomes tarnished, their flags torn and dirty. Their pomp and arrogance replaced by tiredness and hunger.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

But still Suleiman urged his men on.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

Desperate to catch and crush
Dracul. But all they found was a
blackened, desolate wasteland ...

Suleiman bathes in a large GOLDEN BATH filled with fresh
water. While his men are handed a quarter cup of water each.
Their sole ration for the day.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

By now they had marched deep within
Romania, but still Dracul fell
back. Burning his own villages
now, poisoning his own wells.
Drawing the Turk ever onward ...

The once proud Turkish army is ragged and depleted. Men
begin to fall by the wayside. Left to die of thirst, hunger,
exhaustion. But still Suleiman drives them on.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

Until eventually there was nowhere
left to run. At the gates of the
Romanian capital, Suleiman knew
that Dracul would have to turn and
fight. But what greeted the Turks,
the horrors that they saw, no man
could have anticipated ...

As the Turkish army crests the horizon, they stop in
amazement. Shock and horror fill their faces --

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

In the fields before the city,
Dracul had ordered the Turkish
prisoners he had taken be impaled.
Every man, woman and child ...

In SILHOUETTE against the setting sun, a thousand bodies
impaled on sharpened stakes. Some of them still alive.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

On seeing such horror the Turks
began to falter. Thinking they
were fighting demons and not men.
Word spread that Suleiman had
marched them to the very gates of
Hell itself.

Suddenly DEMONIC figures ERUPT from the ground at the
unprotected flanks of the Turkish Army. They are covered in
black ash and barely seem human at all!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

And then Dracul launched his attack. His men had dug trenches in the burnt fields and hid themselves beneath the ash. When they emerged, the Turks thought them the living dead, rising to take their souls.

And at the heart of the battle, like some Demonic Warrior King, is Dracul. He swings a GIANT AXE - laying waste to a dozen Turks with each blow.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

Weak with hunger, crazed with thirst and now terrified for their very souls, the Turks turned and fled.

As the great army flees, Suleiman's litter and his great golden bath lie abandoned in the dirt.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

Suleiman was brought before King Radu in chains. But he was not to be spared ...

We see Suleiman's bloated body impaled with the others in front of the Romanian capital.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

So crushing was this defeat that for forty full years the Turk never dared cross our borders again.

DISSOLVE from the horrors of war to --

PEACEFUL CALM MEADOWS.

As Dracul and a handful of battle weary retainers ride back to his lands.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

As for Dracul, he returned home. To the woman that he loved ...

The countryside here is green and fertile. As Dracul dismount at the gates of his small castle, we see a WOMAN jump into his arms. She clearly loves him. Caring little that still wears his bloodstained armor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)
The woman that he would marry.

As he twirls her in his arms, the scene changes and we find ourselves in --

A BEAUTIFUL WEDDING CHAPEL.

The Woman now dressed in crisp bridal white.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)
The woman that he swore he would
never leave again.

As Dracul and his bride kiss deeply, we still haven't seen her face.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)
The woman that he someday hoped
would bear them children.
Alici'a....

And as the two lovers eventually part, we see the Woman/Alicia's face at last. SHE IS THE DOUBLE OF AURICA.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CASTLE - DINING HALL NIGHT.

Dracul'a pauses in his story for a moment.

CLOSE ON AURICA --

As she stares at the painting of Alici'a that hangs on the castle wall. Mesmerized.

AURICA
What became of them?

DRACUL'A
Treachery. Betrayal.

Aurica's eyes meet those of Dracul'a.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)
Death.

RESUME FLASHBACK --

INT. KING RADU'S THRONE ROOM

We see Radu The Weak. Fuming on his throne --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRACUL'A (V.O.)

King Radu quickly became jealous of the praise heaped upon Dracul. And fearing that the people of his Kingdom loved "The Dragon" more than their King, Radu secretly turned against him.

Radu is conspiring with LACKEYS and FLUNKYS--

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

Under the King's instruction the leaders of the Church accused Dracul of heresy. They claimed that his victory over the Turks was a result of the dark arts. A pact with the devil. Lies were spread that those impaled before the capital's gates were not Turks at all, but Romanian women and children. And that after their deaths Dracul feasted on their flesh and drank of their blood ...

INT. DRACUL'S SUMMER HOUSE

DRACUL'A (V.O.)

Dracul and Alici'a were seized.

A beautiful wooden summer house by a lake. Dracul and Alici'a are torn from one another's arms by the KING'S GUARD.

INT. KING RADU'S THRONE ROOM

Dracul is thrown to the floor before Radu The Weak. As Dracul looks up at the man he once served, his eyes burn with anger and betrayal.

DRACUL'A (V.O.)

Dracul begged for mercy. Not for himself, but for Alici'a. But even his beloved wife was not to be spared...

EXT. COURTYARD

Alici'a is bound to a LADDER which is slowly lowered onto a huge BONFIRE.

DRACUL'A (V.O.)

She was accused of witchcraft and burnt-alive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dracul is forced to watch. Tears stream down his face. But not once does he look away from his love --

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

He watched his love perish before him in the flames. She died in agony, but not once did he look away. Not once did their eyes flinch. And Dracul silently swore vengeance. A vengeance like no other. One which would last till the day he and Alici'a would be reunited.

MATCH CUT FROM
ALICI'A TO
AURICA:

INT. THE CASTLE - DINING HALL NIGHT.

Aurica is caught in the emotion of the story. Never once taking her eyes from Dracul'a. Almost as if it were HER story.

AURICA

And Dracul?

DRACUL'A

There were those who were still loyal to The Dragon. Those who knew that the poisonous lies were untrue.

RESUME
FLASHBACK:

INT. DUNGEON

The door to Dracul's cell swings open to reveal SHADOWY FIGURES. Behind them, several of the King's Guards lie DEAD on the floor.

DRACUL'A (V.O.)

They helped him to escape. And that night Dracul began his vengeance....

INT. KING RADU'S BED CHAMBER

The spoilt, pampered King splashes his face in a golden washbasin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

When he straightens up, Dracul is standing RIGHT BEHIND HIM. Catching sight of him in the mirror, Radu turns, terrified --

RADU

What ...
(stuttering)
... do you want?

Dracul glances down. The King has wet himself.

CLOSE ON KING RADU --

A look of horror on his face. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal --

INT. CHURCH

Radu's head has been SEVERED from his body. It sits atop the CHURCH ALTAR. Surrounding Radu's head are a half dozen other severed heads - all the flunkey Priests and Bishops that had denounced Dracul and Alici'a.

DRACUL'A (V.O.)

And so Dracul turned his back on
the Church that had betrayed him.
The God that had forsaken him.

As the Camera continues to pull back it reveals the church CRUCIFIX. It hangs upside down - desecrated.

INT. THE CASTLE - DINING HALL NIGHT.

SIMON

And then?

DRACUL'A

Some say he embraced the dark arts
of which he had been wrongfully
accused. But in reality, he and
his followers fled from the
capital. And found an isolated
place to call home ...

Dracul'a looks around the ornate hall. At the fortress his "father" built.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

Dracul and his retainers built this
place. A refuge against a World
that had turned its back upon them.

CLOSE ON CRISTOFOR --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Seized by a sudden coughing fit. He is unnaturally pale. Sweating profusely.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

Are you alright?

The food and wine in front of Cristofor is untouched.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

You've hardly eaten.

CRISTOFOR'S P.O.V. --

His vision BLURRED with fever.

He catches sight of a VILLAGER reflected in his wine goblet. IN REFLECTION the man looks almost SKELETAL. His ancient, aged skin shrunk onto his bones. His very flesh seems ROTTEN.

Cristofor turns away disgusted. But what he sees now is even worse --

The tender meat on which the Knights are feasting is old and RANCID. Overflowing with writhing MAGGOTS. Their goblets filled not with fine wine, but with something PUTRID and ROTTEN.

Under the table, Florian growls. Backing away from the leg of mutton Simon had thrown him. This too is rotten with maggots. The dog, like Cristofor, can see through the glamor of this place.

Cristofor lurches to his feet.

VLAS

What is it?

Cristofor turns and stares at Dracul'a. This time, we don't see what Cristofor does. But whatever it is, it terrifies him.

CRISTOFOR

No ... NO!!

Knocking over his chair, Cristofor flees the room.

SIMON

Brother!!

Simon races after him, but his brother has already disappeared into the labyrinthine interior of the castle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLOSE ON DRACUL'A --

Watching the disarray amongst the knights. Smiling.

EXT. THE CASTLE NIGHT.

A silent silhouette against the night sky. Brooding and malevolent.

EXT. THE CASTLE - BATTLEMENTS - LATER

Vlas is organizing search parties. Dispatching men to look for Cristofor.

SIMON
(concerned)
Any sign of him?

Vlas shakes his head.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Keep looking.

Vlas stares up at the towers of the castle. Unsettling and oppressive.

VLAS
This place ...

Simon nods.

SIMON
I know.

He catches sight of Dracul'a. Walking on one of the lower parapets. He disappears into a darkened doorway.

INT. THE CASTLE - CHAPEL

Dracul'a enters the ornate chapel. The place is beautiful. He looks up at the cross and smiles. The CRUCIFIX hangs UPSIDE DOWN. The Chapel is desecrated.

MAYOR PATRESCU (O.S.)
These were the only ones left
alive.

Dracul'a turns to see Patrescu at the back of the chapel. Two TURKISH PRISONERS sit beside him in the pews. Their hands and legs bound. Their mouths gagged. Terror in their eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRACUL'A

Then they will have to do.

He leans down by the first Turk. Sniffs him, like an animal smells its prey.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

For now.

Dracul'a opens his jaws wide. Long FANGS appearing in his mouth.

CLOSE ON THE CHAPEL FLOOR --

The beautiful inlaid mosaics suddenly SPRAYED with BLOOD. The muffled SCREAMS of the Turk.

CLOSE ON THE SECOND TURK --

Eyes wide. Filled with horror. Struggles to be free from the pew, but there is no escape. Dracul'a approaches him. His mouth SMEARED with BLOOD. Eyes filled with blood-lust.

But at the moment of the kill, Dracul'a hesitates.

He looks at his hand as a DROP OF WATER falls on it. Then another. Dracul'a looks up to see

Three women clinging to the ceiling of the Chapel. Defying gravity. Their fingers are crooked and gnarled. Their faces hideous and old. ANGELIKA, ANYA AND ALESSA - THE BRIDES OF DRACUL'A.

The three women are weeping and their tears fall on Dracul'a.

ANGELIKA

(pleading)

Are we to go without?

ANYA

Are we to have nothing?

ALESSA

Please ... Please ...

Dracul'a sighs with impatience. Withdraws from his second victim.

DRACUL'A

Very well ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

And the three Brides descend on the Turk like SHRIEKING DEMONS. Their ferocity is terrifying to behold. They literally TEAR him apart. Bathing in his blood.

CLOSE ON ANYA --

As her head comes up, her mouth and fangs are smeared with the Turk's blood. She is now YOUNG and BEAUTIFUL. Like all of the Brides, she has a passing resemblance to Dracul's lost love Alici'a.

ANYA

Not enough!!!

ANGELIKA

It's not enough!!

ALESSA

More!!!

Angelika and Alessa are also YOUNG and RAVISHING. But Dracul'a has no patience for them. If he once loved these pale imitations of Alici'a, that love is now long gone. He turns away, indifferent --

DRACUL'A

Then do what you do best.

EXT. THE CASTLE - BATTLEMENTS

Simon leads a search party for his brother. Suddenly a trio of SHADOWS are cast over the men. Something passing overhead - between the castle and the moon.

Simon looks up, but whatever it was has gone.

EXT. THE VILLAGE

A Romanian KNIGHT stands guard on the edge of the village. A noise from a nearby BARN catches his attention.

INT. BARN

The Knight cautiously enters the Barn. It's dark. Filled with shadows. Anything could be hiding in here. As the Knight advances, we glimpse him from OBSCURE ANGLES. Something is watching him. Something not human. As the TENSION mounts the Knight rounds a corner and sees --

Angelika, laid out provocatively amongst the hay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Knight can hardly believe his luck as Angelika smiles at him. She parts her dress and beckons him on.

EXT. THE VILLAGE - ROOFTOPS

The second Bride of Dracul'a steps effortlessly into FRAME. As if walking on air. Anya surveys the village below. She spies a victim. ANOTHER KNIGHT. This one guarding the village square.

Anya smiles and FLIES UP into the AIR.

EXT. THE VILLAGE SQUARE

The Knight looks over his shoulder to see Anya step from the shadows.

She smiles seductively at him.

EXT. THE CASTLE - BATTLEMENTS

High on the castle walls, Aurica stands alone. Looking out over the moonlit forest. It's a romantic, but also menacing image. Amongst the towering Gothic architecture Aurica seems very small and vulnerable.

CLOSE ON AURICA --

As suddenly something MOVES BEHIND HER!!!

It's Alessa. CRAWLING DOWN THE CASTLE WALL HEADFIRST!

The Vampire Bride rears up behind Aurica, fangs bared, ready to strike.

When suddenly Dracul'a steps into FRAME. Saving Aurica. Alessa SNARLS angrily and backs away. Scuttling back into the night.

DRACUL'A

(to Aurica)

You should not be out at night.

Aurica turns, surprised (but not disappointed) to see him.

AURICA

Why? Surely I am safe in this fortress.

DRACUL'A

Of course.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dracul'a glances over Aurica's shoulder. In the distance, Alessa disappears over the castle wall.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)
But the night air is cold.

He motions towards a door, back into the castle --

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)
Please.

INT. THE CASTLE - AURICA'S BED CHAMBER

Aurica stands at the door to her chamber. Dracul'a in the corridor outside.

AURICA
Well ... Good night.

DRACUL'A
Good night.

Aurica closes the door. The attraction between these two is undeniable.

SIMON (O.S.)
I don't trust him.

Aurica turns, shocked, to see Simon sitting quietly in the shadows of her chamber.

AURICA
What are you doing here?

SIMON
Looking for you.

Simon gets to his feet.

SIMON (CONT'D)
There's still no sign of Cristofor.
(darkly)
This place has a curse upon it.

Simon produces an ornate golden necklace from which hangs a CRUCIFIX.

SIMON (CONT'D)
I want you to have this. For your protection.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Aurica turns and presents her neck to him. Delicate and slender.

SIMON (CONT'D)

It was my mother's, and her mother's before that.

As Simon drapes the necklace around her, his hand brushes Aurica's skin. A shiver runs through them both.

AURICA

Thank you.

She turns. Their faces just inches apart. For a moment they hold a look and its ELECTRIC.

SIMON

I'm placing a guard on the corridor outside. Don't leave this room tonight.

INT. THE CASTLE - CORRIDOR

Simon closes the door to Aurica's room. A GUARD stands to attention.

SIMON

Guard her with your life. No one is to enter.

INT. SOMEWHERE IN THE CASTLE

CLOSE ON CRISTOFOR --

Huddled in a corner in the darkness. Sweating and shaking. Going through agony. The mother of all withdrawals.

INT. THE CASTLE - CORRIDOR - LATER

The Guard stands to attention outside Aurica's room. Allowing no one entry.

INT. THE CASTLE - AURICA'S BED CHAMBER NIGHT.

Aurica is asleep, but she is troubled by vivid dreams. Her sheets are cast aside. Her negligee soaked in sweat.

CLOSE ON THE STONE WALL BEHIND THE BED --

As the blocks of stone begin to MOVE. They silently turn and then withdraw. Like pieces of a gigantic puzzle box, moving with a logic of their own.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They create a dark opening in the wall, a GAPING VOID which spreads until it consumes both the ceiling and the floor.

Aurica's bed now floats in a dark limbo. Supported by a narrow pillar of stone which rises up from the hidden depths.

Aurica is still sleeping, but her dreams are becoming more tortured. She throws herself from one side of the bed to another, as if trying to wake. As her movements become increasingly wild, Aurica comes perilously close to the edge. If she were to fall from the bed, it would be to her death.

As Aurica's dreams seem to crescendo, something rises out of the dark chasm. It is Dracul'a. Floating on air. Looming out of the shadows.

Aurica's lips part, but still she does not wake.

Dracul'a leans over her. Breathing her in. Savoring her.

He brushes a strand of her hair away like a tender lover.

And Aurica's eyes FLICKER OPEN. But it as if she doesn't truly see. Her voice is distant, hypnotized --

AURICA

My love ...

Dracul'a smiles then rears back, his mouth stretched wide, filled with FANGS. He lunges for Aurica, like an animal devouring its prey. But Dracul'a is stopped at the last moment, SNARLING like a BEAST when he sees the CRUCIFIX around her neck. The one placed there by Simon.

The very sight of the cross SEARS Dracul'a's flesh. For an instant revealing the his true form -- the ancient withered face of a monster.

AURICA SCREAMS and --

WAKES.

Sitting bolt upright in bed. Dracul'a has gone. The room is intact.

Everything that had gone before just a vivid dream.

EXT. THE CASTLE - WINDOW TO AURICA'S BED CHAMBER NIGHT.

Aurica goes to the window and stares out over the moonlit forest far below. The Camera PULLS BACK to reveal Dracul'a. Mere inches from her. UPSIDE DOWN. CLINGING TO THE WALL LIKE A SPIDER.

EXT. THE CASTLE - BELL TOWER DAWN.

The GIANT BELL tolls three times as dawn breaks over the castle walls. A cold mist hangs in the air, shrouding the village. In the distance, Simon's Knights search the houses and barns for their missing brethren --

KNIGHTS
(calling out)
Anton! Mirca! Vasile!

EXT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL

Vlas makes his report to Simon --

VLAS
(grim)
Three more missing. Two from the watch on the village. One guarding the castle walls.

SIMON
When?

VLAS
Sometime last night.

SIMON
There much be Turks still alive in the forest.

VLAS
Perhaps ...

It's clear neither man really believes this. But what else could the explanation be? Simon glances at the Castle walls - bearing down upon them.

SIMON
And my brother?

VLAS
Still no sign.

SIMON
Damn it.

Simon's frustration is building - fighting an enemy he cannot see.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Where is Dracul'a?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VLAS

No sign of him since last night.

SIMON

Well find him.

As Vlas leaves, Simon catches sight of Aurica, leaving the castle.

EXT. THE VILLAGE DAY.

Aurica walks through the village. Headed for the forest. Around her, Simon's Knights are still searching.--

KNIGHTS

(calling out)

Anton! Mirca! Vasile!

EXT. THE FOREST DAY.

The village disappears from sight as Aurica wanders through the forest. She stops at a narrow brook. The crystal mountain water looks inviting. Aurica kneels beside it and dips her hands into the stream. The water is icy cold, but refreshing, and Aurica splashes her face. The water runs down her neck, soaking into her cotton dress.

Aurica sighs in delight, then suddenly stops. ALL THE NOISE OF THE FOREST HAS CEASED. No birdcall, no animal sounds. Nothing.

Aurica glances around, suddenly afraid.

As the tension mounts, SHE IS GRABBED ROUGHLY FROM BEHIND!!

The muscular arms belong to --

SIMON

(angry whisper)

What in hell are you doing out here?

AURICA

I couldn't ...

SIMON

(quiet but stern)

Keep your voice down!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AURICA

(whispered)

I couldn't stand to be in that place any longer. I had to get out.

Simon pulls her roughly back into the undergrowth.

AURICA (CONT'D)

(angry)

What is wrong with you?

Simon nods upstream a distance. For a moment Aurica sees nothing, then three fierce TURKISH RAIDERS emerge from the forest. Then another two RIGHT BESIDE where Aurica and Simon are hiding! Then another three further downstream.

They are SURROUNDED.

The Turkish Raiders scan the forest. It seems as though they don't see Simon and Aurica.

CLOSE ON AURICA --

As she notices something hanging from the nearest Turk's belt - A GOLD PURSE. Close enough to touch. The temptation is just too much. Despite their situation, and despite the fact that the Turk is an ugly GIANT of a man, Aurica just can't resist the opportunity to steal.

CLOSE ON THE GIANT TURK --

Suddenly aware of something. He turns to see Aurica crouched in the undergrowth. Stiletto in one hand and his Gold Purse in the other.

AURICA (CONT'D)

(shrugs)

Sorry.

The Giant Turk raises his axe, but never gets a chance to strike. Simon runs him through in an instant!

Their cover blown, Simon leaps into action, becoming a whirlwind of steel - LONGSWORD in one hand, a CHAIN WHIP in the other. Both in constant motion.

And wherever they move, men die.

The Turks are all seasoned killers, but still no match for Simon. In an amazing display of swordsmanship, he kills all seven of them with ruthless precision.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AURICA (CONT'D)

(impressed)

It seems I owe you my life for a second time.

SIMON

Perhaps you should stay out of the forest in future ...

He cleans his blade on one of the dead bodies.

SIMON (CONT'D)

... it seems to disagree with you.

Simon turns over the Turk's body and searches through his jerkin.

AURICA

I thought you didn't approve of looting the dead.

Simon checks another body.

SIMON

I'm not looting them. I'm searching them.

AURICA

(sarcastic)

Oh ... searching.

SIMON

Three of my men disappeared last night. I thought these Turks may be responsible.

AURICA

And?

SIMON

If they were ...

He steps away from the bodies empty handed.

SIMON (CONT'D)

... they took nothing.

AURICA

You're bleeding.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Blood drips from a deep cut in Simon's jerkin. Simon puts his hand to the wound, only to have it knocked aside by Aurica.

AURICA (CONT'D)

No.

-(smiles)

My turn this time.

EXT. THE FOREST - MINUTES LATER

Simon is stripped to the waist. His muscular torso hewn of oak. Aurica is doing a good job of stitching his wound. A rough iron needle sliding through his flesh.

Simon doesn't flinch.

AURICA

How am I doing?

SIMON

You dress a wound like a man.

Aurica smiles back at him.

AURICA

It's the only thing I do like a man.

She ties off the thread and admires her handiwork.

AURICA (CONT'D)

This should heal ... better than the others.

She nods to the multiple scars that criss-cross Simon's body -

AURICA (CONT'D)

You have so many wounds. You must be a great warrior.

SIMON

If I were truly a great warrior ...
Then they wouldn't have hit me.

He pulls his jerkin back on. In the distance, the sound of Romanian Knights hunting for their comrades --

KNIGHTS (O.S.)

Anton! Mirca! Vasile!

EXT. THE VILLAGE SQUARE DAY.

Two Knights move through the square, right past the village well. Calling out to the lost men-at-arms --

KNIGHTS

Anton! Mirca! Vasile!

The villagers watch them from behind shuttered windows. Their blank stares and glassy eyes giving nothing away.

KNIGHTS (CONT'D)

Anton!

INT. THE VILLAGE WELL - CONTINUOUS

THE CAMERA is deep within the well. The sky a tiny circle of azure, barely the size of a gold piece. The voices of the Knights echo in the distance --

KNIGHTS

Mirca! Vasile!

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal --

THREE SUNKEN FACES. Flesh pulled tightly across their skulls. The missing three Knights. Lying undiscovered at the bottom of the well. Their dead bodies drained entirely of blood.

INT. THE CASTLE - DEPTHS DAY.

In the dark recesses of the fortress, Cristofor is huddled in a corner shaking. His skin is deathly white, almost translucent. His body soaked with sweat.

A sudden noise makes him look up. Simon's dog, Florian, pads out of the shadows. Its sympathetic eyes gaze at Cristofor. Florian sees his pain. Whines in sympathy.

CRISTOFOR

Good dog. Good dog.

Cristofor looks away for a moment, pained. Fighting a huge internal battle of some sort. But when he looks back at Florian, his eyes are GLAZED.

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)

Good dog ... Come here.

The faithful hound pads forward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)

That's it.

Unsuspecting Florian licks Cristofor's pale, sweating face.

INT. THE CASTLE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

An empty corridor, deep in the heart of the fortress. In the distance we hear a terrible whelping. The sound of a wounded dog crying out. Agony.

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL DAY.

Simon is interrogating Mayor Patrescu. Vlas stands at a distance. He's never liked the Mayor, but now he looks like he'd like to split the man in two.

SIMON

Where is Dracul'a?

MAYOR PATRESCU

My apologies. But sudden business has called my Lord away.

SIMON

Business? What business?

MAYOR PATRESCU

My Lord's lands are vast. They sometimes require his attention. He will return tonight.

Simon is far from convinced. He about to push the Mayor further when he catches sight of something.

SIMON

Florian!!

The dog staggers into the hall. He seems skeletal. The life sucked from him.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Florian!

The Faithful hound collapses at Simon's feet. Dead. His coat flecked with blood. Simon picks up the hound in his arms. On the verge of tears. This is more than a dog to Simon. Florian was a constant companion in battle. Part of his family.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Who did this to you?!

INT. THE CASTLE - CORRIDOR

Simon leads Vlas and a party of men into the depths of the castle. He is following a trail of blood left by Florian. They reach a DEAD END.

VLAS

Nothing.

But a sudden movement makes Simon hesitate. He holds a flaming torch above him to illuminate a shadowed corner. Rocking to and fro is a disheveled figure. His back to them.

FIGURE

(mumbled - like a fast
mantra)

Lord Protect Me ... Lord Protect Me
... Lord Protect Me ...

SIMON

(unsure)

Cristofor?

The figure turns. It is indeed Cristofor. His mouth and chin covered in blood. He sees Simon and holds his arms out in a desperate plea --

CRISTOFOR

Oh God ...

His hands are also covered in Florian's blood.

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)

Please help me brother ...

INT. THE CASTLE - CRISTOFOR'S BED CHAMBER - DAY.

Cristofor is wracked with convulsions. It takes several men to hold him down.

CRISTOFOR

No!! No!!

Sunlight streams in through the open window. Cristofor writhes away from it.

AURICA (O.S.)

Close the shutters!

Aurica stands in the doorway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AURICA (CONT'D)

The light seems to upset him.

One of the men does as she commands. Aurica joins Simon at Cristofor's bedside.

AURICA (CONT'D)

Let me help. Sometimes a man will fight less if it is a woman holding him down.

Aurica puts her hands on Cristofor. And immediately he becomes still. His eyes fix on her.

CRISTOFOR

(crazed)

You!! You are the one!

Aurica is taken aback by the intensity of Cristofor's gaze.

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)

He's coming ... from the darkness.
For you. He's coming!!

SIMON

Who's coming?

CRISTOFOR

The Dragon!!

And Cristofor is seized by convulsions once again. His lips flecked with foam --

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)

(to Aurica)

He's coming for you!!! You've killed us all ...

Simon moves Aurica away for her own protection. Cristofor screams at the men holding him down.

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)

You'll all die in this place!

SIMON

Restrain him. For his own good.

Aurica glances back at Cristofor.

AURICA

What did he mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SIMON

He's delirious. It means nothing.

AURICA

The woman in the painting, Dracul's wife. I look just like her. This is no accident. He brought me here.

Simon takes Aurica by the arm.

SIMON

You are under my protection. I will see that no harm comes to you. I swear it.

Simon moves Aurica to the door of the chamber, where Vlas is waiting.

VLAS

More bad news ...

HARD CUT TO:

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL DAY.

Simon, Aurica and Vlas stand in the Great Hall. Three pale, bloodless bodies are laid on the floor before them. The three missing Knights.

VLAS

They were found in the village well.

SIMON

The villagers?

VLAS

Claim to know nothing.

SIMON

What in God's Name happened to them?

Simon examines the bodies. The distinctive PUNCTURE MARKS in their necks.

VLAS

Not a drop of blood left.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMON

This is not the work of Turks or bandits.

AURICA

This is not the work of men.

Her chill words hang in the air, until --

VLAS

There's more.

To one side of the bodies, a blanket covers something. Vlas removes the blanket to reveal Florian. He kneels by the dead hound and pushes its neck to one side. The dog has the same distinctive puncture marks as the three dead knights.

VLAS (CONT'D)

The wounds are the same.

SIMON

(angry)

What are you saying?

VLAS

Nothing my Lord.

But it's clear what Vlas means. Simon flies into a rage.

SIMON

You imply my brother did this? How dare you.

Caught up in anger, Simon strikes Vlas. He regrets it immediately. Vlas doesn't react.

VLAS

(calmly)

I raised him like a son. As I did you.

SIMON

I'm sorry Vlas.

VLAS

I love Cristofor.

(beat)

But this is the Devil's Country.
And the man I see on that bed is no longer your brother.

INT. THE CASTLE - CRISTOFOR'S BED CHAMBER SUNSET.

The setting sun is visible through the shutters. Cristofor is locked in the room and bound to the bed. But he struggles and tears against his restraints like a man possessed.

And the lower the sun gets, the stronger he seems to become.

EXT. THE CASTLE - BELL TOWER SUNSET.

On the highest point of the highest tower stands a dark, caped figure, outlined against the ochre remains of the sunset. The bell tolls for the third and last time --

DRACULA

Come to me.

INT. THE CASTLE - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE CRISTOFOR'S CHAMBER

The guards on the door hear a terrible INHUMAN noise from within. They grip their swords tightly, unsure of what to do. Simon appears behind them. A grim look on his face.

SIMON

I'll deal with this.

INT. THE CASTLE - CRISTOFOR'S BED CHAMBER DUSK.

Simon enters, locking the door behind him. The room has been TORN apart. The heavy wooden bed reduced to splinters. Cristofor is GONE. Simon walks to the window. The shutters have been ripped from their hinges.

Simon stares out at the dark night sky.

SIMON

Cristofor ...

CRISTOFOR (O.S.)

Yes brother.

Simon turns in shock to see his brother. Clinging to the ceiling of the chamber far above. His face is drawn and deathly pale. His eyes BLAZE in the half light. He is a fully fledged VAMPIRE.

Simon is frozen in shock as Cristofor LEAPS from the ceiling. Both men tumble across the floor. Simon tries to draw his sword, but Cristofor knocks it aside. The blade slides across the stone floor to the other side of the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cristofor lunges at his brother, but Simon smashes a chair over him. Driving him back for a moment.

INT. THE CASTLE - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE CRISTOFOR'S CHAMBER

The worried guards can hear the sound of battle within, but the door is locked. Vlas pushes aside them.

VLAS
Stand aside!

He hefts a HUGE AXE and swings at the door.

INT. THE CASTLE - CRISTOFOR'S BED CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Simon slams Cristofor against a wall. Holding him in place with a heavy wooden chair.

SIMON
Cristofor ...

CLOSE ON CRISTOFOR --

His face CHANGING every second. Flickering between the Cristofor we know and the BEAST within that is rapidly consuming him.

CRISTOFOR
The hunger brother ... The pain!!

Cristofor CONVULSES and his eyes BLAZE with inhuman hunger. He FLINGS Simon across the room. Simon lands badly. He's bleeding. His sword lies close by.

CLOSE ON CRISTOFOR --

The sight of blood driving him into a FRENZY --

SIMON
Brother! No!!

CRISTOFOR
I can't fight it ... I ...

Cristofor CONVULSES in pain, as the last vestige of his humanity is consumed. The vampire within taking hold for good now.

ON SIMON --

Reaching for his sword.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ON CRISTOFOR --

Leaping through the air with unnatural speed and grace. His face MONSTROUS. His FANGS bared.

ON THE BROTHERS --

As they meet. Simon's sword coming up at the last second. Cristofor landing on it. Impaling himself. The blade going clean through his heart and emerging from his back.

ON VLAS --

As he finally bursts through the door. He sees the brothers locked in a death embrace. Sees the tears streaming down Simon's face.

CLOSE ON CRISTOFOR --

Sliding down the sword until he is FACE TO FACE with Simon. In the last moments of his life, Cristofor's visage loses all trace of the beast. Cristofor returns to the noble, handsome man that he was before.

But now his voice is weak. Barely a whisper --

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)

I'm sorry brother ...

And Cristofor's eyes close for the last time.

ANGLE ON --

Simon's Knights watching the scene from a distance. Shocked, and for the first time, truly SCARED.

EXT. THE CASTLE NIGHT.

HIGH ANGLE of three tiny figures crossing the bridge from the Castle to the Statuary Garden. PULL BACK to reveal that this is Dracul'a's POINT OF VIEW. He stands amongst the gargoyles that stare down from the Bell Tower.

Dracul'a regards the figures below with icy detachment. Like chess pieces in some elaborate game.

EXT. THE CASTLE - STATUARY GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Simon and Vlas carry the shrouded body of Cristofor between them. Aurica follows close behind. She carries Cristofor's sword and three shovels. Simon stops at a suitable clearing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He lowers the body to the ground. Vlas reaches for a shovel, but Simon stops him.

SIMON

No.

It is the first time he has spoken since killing his own brother --

SIMON (CONT'D)

I will do this alone.

EXT. THE CASTLE - STATUARY GARDEN - LATER

Aurica and Vlas watch Simon as he digs. He is possessed by a manic energy. Driven by grief and guilt and rage.

VLAS

I watched him bury his mother and father the same way. They were slain by the Turks. He was just a boy.

Aurica gazes up at the old warrior. Sees the emotion in his face. Vlas loves Simon like a son.

VLAS (CONT'D)

War and death is all he's known.
And now we are all that's left.

Aurica grasps Vlas' hand. Holding it tight.

EXT. THE CASTLE - STATUARY GARDEN - LATER

Simon, Vlas and Aurica stand by the grave side. Simon thrusts his brother's sword into the soil. It acts as a marker. The hilt and blade forming a CROSS. Simon kneels by the sword, his hands resting on the hilt.

SIMON

(quietly, so no one else
can hear)

I love you brother. Kiss our
parents for me. Tell them I will
join them soon.

The sudden noise of hooves breaks the moment. Simon stands and sees a half dozen horsemen exit the castle at a full gallop. They thunder over the bridge and through the Statuary Garden. Simon calls to them --

SIMON (CONT'D)

Demetri!! Emil!! Henric!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But they ride past oblivious. Headed for the forest. Simon turn to Vlas --

SIMON (CONT'D)

Vlas?

VLAS

I tried to make them stay. There was nothing I could do.

(reluctant)

The men are scared my lord.

SIMON

Scared?! These are men, not children.

VLAS

They believe this place is cursed. That it will drive us all insane. Until we kill one another.

SIMON

But these men are loyal. Demetri and Emil have followed me for years.

VLAS

Your men would follow you anywhere Lord. But now they say you have gone too far.

(beat)

That you have ridden them to the gates of hell itself.

Simon stares at his brother's grave, then up at the towering castle walls.

SIMON

Perhaps they are right.

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL

Simon enters the hall. Filled with a new determination --

SIMON

How many men remain?

VLAS

Constantin, Marius, Lucian.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMON

Tell them to prepare to leave.

(beat)

We ride tonight.

Vlas smiles. Clearly pleased by the decision.

VLAS

Very good my Lord.

INT. THE CASTLE - AURICA'S BED CHAMBER NIGHT.

Aurica hurriedly packs her few possessions. She also takes the JEWEL ENCRUSTED COMB for good measure.

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL

MARIUS and LUCIAN prepare for departure. Simon packs his crossbow onto his horse. He looks around, suddenly worried.

SIMON

Where is Aurica?

VLAS

Packing.

Off Simon's look --

VLAS (CONT'D)

Don't worry ... I sent Constantin with her.

INT. THE CASTLE - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE AURICA'S CHAMBER

Aurica exits. A bag slung over her shoulder.

AURICA

(glancing over her shoulder)

I'm done ... Let's go.

But when she turns back she sees Constantin slumped in the corridor. Glassy dead eyes stare back at her. He's completely DRAINED OF BLOOD.

Aurica takes a step back and turns, right into Angelika. Her lips stained with fresh warm blood --

ANGELIKA

Am I not beautiful?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Aurica turns away, but is blocked by another Bride of Dracul'a --

ANYA

Am I not beautiful?

Her lips are also stained with Constantin's blood. A moment later they are joined by the third bride --

ALESSA

Are we not beautiful?

Aurica is completely surrounded. She reaches for her stiletto, but it is not there.

ANGELIKA

Looking for this?

The blade is in Angelika's hand.

ALESSA

We were beautiful once.

ANYA

Beautiful enough for him.

ANGELIKA

But not anymore.

The brides circle Aurica. Their faces just inches from hers. Their lips and teeth slick with blood.

ALESSA

Now he doesn't care for us.

ANGELIKA

He's so cruel.

ANYA

So cold.

ALESSA

So very cold.

ANGELIKA

But you will never know.

ALESSA

He won't have you.

ANYA

WE WILL ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Anya lunges for Aurica, FANGS bared. Aurica tries to fight, but is held by Angelika and Alessa. Their grip is like iron. Anya's fangs begin to sink into Aurica's flesh as --

DRACUL'A (O.S.)

NO!!!!

Anya is flung to one side, impacting with the stone wall. Bones popping.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

She is mine!!

He punches through Angelika's body, ripping out her heart. As Angelika crumples, Alessa cowers in terror.

ALESSA

No!!! Please!!

EXT. THE CASTLE

Alessa EXPLODES through a stained glass window.

Her body drops 200 feet and lands on the ground with a dull, fleshy thump. She is IMPALED with multiple shards of stained glass. One has gone clear through her heart.

INT. THE CASTLE - CORRIDOR

Anya, the last remaining bride crawls away from Dracul'a. His shadow falls over her.

ANYA

(begging)

Please ... Please my Lord ... You loved me once. Show mercy.

CLOSE ON AURICA --

Watching in horror. We hear but do not see what Dracul'a does to Anya. A small, but important, mercy.

Moving with impossible speed, Dracul'a suddenly appears BEHIND Aurica.

DRACUL'A

Look away ...

Aurica turns. Startled by his sudden appearance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

Your eyes should not behold such horror.

Aurica want to turn away from him but CANNOT. Something deep within his eyes keeps her held. Something mesmerizing.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

They were foul creatures. They would have done you harm. And I could not allow that to happen.

Aurica tries to steal a glance at Anya, but Dracul'a will not let her.

AURICA

Is that what will happen to me?

DRACUL'A

To you?

Dracul'a's words are like velvet. Aurica's pupils DILATE. She seems to be sinking into some trance-like state --

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

I could never allow any harm to come to you.

The background behind Aurica starts to become blurred and indistinct.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

I failed you once before my love...

And now the background behind Aurica TRANSFORMS. It is 100 years previous. The show trial of Alici'a as a witch.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

I will not let that happen again.

And now Aurica IS Alici'a. Bound to a ladder. About to be lowered into a blazing bonfire. Alici'a/Aurica is blinded by the heat of the flames. Choking on the fumes. But never once losing sight of her husband held in shackles across the courtyard.

Dracul stares back at her with UNDYING LOVE.

And even at the point of death, Alici'a/Aurica stares back at him with the same unwavering/undying love.

(CONTINUED)

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

When you were taken from me, I
swore vengeance.

FLASHBACK --

We see Dracul in King Radu's Dungeon. The Door swings open to reveal dead guards and the shadowy forms of Dracul's rescuers. One of his supporters steps from the shadows - it is Patrescu.

DRACUL'A

But more than that. I swore that I
would be with you again. That fate
could not part us. That death
should have no dominion over us.

Dracul leaves the desecrated church that contains the severed heads of King Radu and his flunkey priests. He has set it ABLAZE. Patrescu is by his side.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

And so I fled to the mountains.
Seeking ancient wisdom. Forbidden
lore.

Dracul and his FOLLOWERS ride into the forbidding, storm capped mountains. We recognize many of the villagers amongst them. Only now we see them in their original guise - Romanian Knights and Noblemen.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

The people of these mountains have
their own beliefs. More ancient
and timeless than this upstart
Christ.

Deep within a mountain pass, Dracul and his followers discover an ANCIENT STONE CIRCLE, wreathed in mist. Around it worship black clad DRUIDS --

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

They believe that there is no
heaven. No hell. And when one
life ends, another begins. An
endless cycle.

Dracul worships amongst the Druids. Drinks from an ancient chalice. Blood spills down his lips. His pact with the darkness complete --

CONTINUED:

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

And even if the one you love is
taken from you, if you are patient
and true, they will be returned to
you again ...

CLOSE ON DRACUL --

His eyes blazing with an unnatural light. Ensuring the
immortality of his love. He gazes at something in his hand.
A beautiful golden LOCKET. And inside it, a portrait of his
murdered bride Alici'a.

And now the scene TRANSFORMS again, the portrait of Alici'a
becoming the Flesh and Blood Aurica, leading us seamlessly
into --

INT. THE CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Dracul'a has his arms around Aurica. She melts into him.
Her trance complete.

DRACUL'A

I have waited so long for you. So
much pain ... So many
disappointments. But at last ...
you have been returned to me.

He glances at Aurica's neck, then averts his gaze, suddenly
pained.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

There is only one thing that stands
between us.

Simon's CRUCIFIX still hangs around Aurica's neck.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

Renounce the God that cursed us
both. The God that forsook us.
That mocked us in our time of
greatest need.

Aurica's hands reach up to her neck.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

Renounce him and come to me ...

Aurica discards the crucifix. It falls to the ground.

AURICA

My love.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dracul'a's FANGS grow and he sinks his teeth into her unprotected neck. But Aurica does not fight. Instead she TREMBLES, almost in ECSTASY. Drawing Dracul'a closer to her. Deeper into her.

SIMON (O.S.)

NO!!!

Simon stands in the doorway, sword and chain whip drawn.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Keep away from her!

Simon strikes out with his whip. The razor sharp chains catching Dracul'a across the face. Drawing blood. Dracul'a HOWLS a deep guttural cry. More animal than human. And when he looks up at Simon his face is that of a BEAST!

SIMON (CONT'D)

Foul monster!

Simon strikes with the whip again, but this time Dracul'a catches it. Wrapping it around his arm he PULLS Simon off his feet with inhuman strength.

Simon crashes to the ground and Dracul'a LEAPS at him.

Left without support, Aurica crumples to the floor.

SIMON (CONT'D)

You shall not have her!

He plunges his sword deep into Dracul'a's shoulder. But instead of submitting, Dracul'a grips the blade with his bare hand. Oblivious to the sharp metal cutting into his flesh, he PULLS the sword out of his shoulder.

DRACUL'A

You can not stop me.

He BREAKS Simon's sword in two with his bare hands. Simon raises his whip, but Dracul'a is lightning fast. He sends Simon flying backwards with a bone crushing blow.

Simon lands close beside Aurica. Her eyes flicker. Barely conscious. But they lock on Simon.

AURICA

(whispered, desperate)

Help me ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

And with the last of her strength, she glances at something on the floor - THE CRUCIFIX.

Dracul'a leaps at Simon, but this time Simon fights back not with a blade, but the crucifix in his hand.

Dracul'a recoils in horror. Simon presses the crucifix to his enemy's forehead where it BURNS the flesh.

Screaming, Dracul'a stumbles backwards and FALLS from the high window through which he threw Alessa.

EXT. THE CASTLE

Simon watches as Dracul'a plunges to his doom. His black cape flapping urgently around him as he falls into a blanket of mist. It's hard to tell in the dim light, and it could be the cloak flailing around him, but for a moment, it almost looks as though Dracul'a sprouts DARK BLACK WINGS.

And then he is gone. Swallowed by the mist.

INT. THE CASTLE

Simon steps back from the window. Gathers up Aurica in his arms. Vlas enters, followed quickly by Marius and Lucian.

VLAS

(concerned)

My Lord!

SIMON

I'm alright.

VLAS

And Dracul'a?

SIMON

Dead.

AURICA

No.

Everyone turns to Aurica, cradled in Simon's arms. She is pale, traumatized, barely conscious. But there is an unnatural light in her eyes.

AURICA (CONT'D)

He still lives. I feel him.

SIMON

You feel him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AURICA

His heartbeat ... In time to mine.
My blood in his veins.

(beat)

We are joined.

VLAS

My God.

OFF VLAS' LOOK --

We see that Aurica also carries the faint outline of a cross on her forehead. A shadow of Dracul'a's scar. These two are indeed joined.

EXT. THE CASTLE - AURICA'S BED CHAMBER NIGHT.

Aurica lies in a shallow, restless sleep. She is pale and weak. Her skin covered in a sheen of sweat. Simon and Vlas look on concerned - they have seen all this before.

VLAS

Exactly like Cristofer.

Simon touches Aurica's forehead lightly. It's clear he's in love with her.

SIMON

What can we do?

VLAS

(shrugs)

On the battlefield, when a wound becomes infected, we cut it out.

Simon follows Vlas' thought --

SIMON

He is the disease.

VLAS

If we kill him, perhaps we spare her.

(beat, then unsure --)

Perhaps.

INT. THE CASTLE - VARIOUS ROOMS - MONTAGE

Simon and his men tear the castle apart searching for Dracul'a.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMON

When we find him, how do we kill him?

VLAS

He fears the cross and he feeds on blood. We pin him with the cross. Then we cut out his heart.
 (thinks for a moment)
 We hack off his head for good measure.

EXT. THE CASTLE NIGHT.

The moon races across the night sky.

INT. THE CASTLE - AURICA'S BED CHAMBER NIGHT.

Aurica wakes from her fevered sleep. But her eyes are unfocused, her pupils dilated. Mesmerized.

AURICA

(whispered)

My love ...

INT. THE CASTLE - DRACUL'A'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

We don't get a clear sense of the chamber, focussing instead on Dracul'a. He lies in the darkness in what seems to be a STONE SARCOPHAGUS filled with EARTH.

He is in the form of a BEAST. Part bat, part wolf, but still recognizably human. The scar of the cross festers on his forehead. Clearly he was badly wounded, but he is slowly regaining his strength in the darkness.

AURICA (O.S.)

My love ...

His eyes open when he hears Aurica's whispered voice. These too are the eyes of a BEAST.

DRACUL'A

Soon ... Soon we shall be together.

Even his voice is bestial --

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

Soon we shall be immortal ...

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL

Simon stands by the embers in the huge fireplace. His men gather around him.

SIMON

Vlas?

VLAS

No sign of him ...

SIMON

Marius? Lucian?

They shake their heads.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Then we search again.

VLAS

There is no room, no chamber we have not searched already.

SIMON

Damn it!

Simon slumps down into a chair. The same chair Dracul'a had been seated at when the fortress was attacked by the Turks. The chess board and its half played game sits before him.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Where is he hiding?!

Simon stares at the chess pieces. Then suddenly lashes out in frustration. Chess pieces go flying. The RED KING is broken in half. Exactly as the Germans will find it in 500 years. After a moment --

VLAS

My Lord ...

SIMON

(impatient)

What is it?

He follows Vlas' gaze to --

The CHESS BOARD. Despite Simon's blow, four chess pieces have not moved. THEY REMAIN LOCKED TO THE BOARD. Simon tries to lift one of them, but there is resistance. After a moment it comes away from the board. Underneath the piece is a piece of polished metal - A MAGNET.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Romanian Knights look up at the sudden sound of grinding metal and stone. THE BRIDGE TO THE CASTLE IS ROTATING.

Simon lifts another chess piece and the entrance to the Great Hall is blocked by METAL SPIKES which rise from the floor.

The third piece he lifts activates the screaming GOTHIC STATUES in the Statuary Garden.

Simon and Vlas stare at the fourth and last chess piece. This one is the BLACK KING - in the form of a DRAGON. And its purpose is unknown.

Simon carefully picks it up.

A beat. Then nothing. Simon glances at Vlas.

Another beat. Then a tremble runs through the room. The spooked horses BOLT as the vibration builds in intensity. Like a coming earthquake.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT --

Showing the giant MOSAIC of a Coiled Dragon which dominates the floor of the Great Hall. One by one, the Coils begin to SINK INTO THE FLOOR, creating a GIANT CIRCULAR STAIRCASE that spirals away into the darkness.

INT. THE CASTLE - DRACUL'A'S CHAMBER

Dracul'a suddenly wakes. Aware of the danger.

DRACUL'A

Kill them. Kill them all. Kill them now ...

EXT. THE VILLAGE SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Mayor Patrescu steps INTO FRAME, a murderous look on his face. He has heard his master's call.

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL

Simon and his men stare down at the spiral staircase. It disappears off into the darkness.

VLAS

It seems we have found the Dragon's lair.

LUCIAN (O.S.)

Sir!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lucian points to the bridge outside. A procession of villagers are crossing to the Castle. They are armed to the teeth. Vlas turns to Simon.

VLAS

We will deal with this.

He stares into the depths of the Dragon's coils --

VLAS (CONT'D)

Slay the beast. Save her.

Simon glances at the villagers led by Patrescu. The odds are overwhelming --

SIMON

Vlas ...

But Vlas shakes his head. Throws Simon his sword.

VLAS

Go! Go now!

Simon shares one last look with Vlas, then hurries into the depths. Vlas shouts after him

VLAS (CONT'D)

Godspeed!

Then Vlas turns his attention back to the mob outside.

VLAS (CONT'D)

(quietly - to himself)

And God help us all.

The villagers reach the Metal Spikes that bar their entry into the Castle. Without missing a beat they begin to SCALE THE WALLS LIKE LIZARDS OR SPIDERS. Their true, inhuman forms becoming more evident by the second.

Vlas turns to Lucian and Marius --

VLAS (CONT'D)

To the battlements!

INT. THE CASTLE - SPIRAL STAIRCASE

Simon descends into the fabric of the mountain, sword in hand. The chain whip is fastened to his belt, his crossbow slung over his back.

A blazing torch held aloft.

INT. THE CASTLE - AURICA'S BED CHAMBER

Aurica sits bolt upright in bed. She seems to have no control over her own body - as if moved by unseen hands.

DRACUL'A (O.S.)

Come to me ...

Aurica rises from her bed.

INT. THE CASTLE - DRACUL'A'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

DRACUL'A

Come to me ... All my children ...

INT. THE CASTLE - SPIRAL STAIRCASE

Simon reaches the foot of the stairs. The inky shadows seem almost alive. As if they were trying to smother the feeble, flickering flames of his torch.

Ahead lies a vast portal etched in ancient RUNES. And beyond, darkness.

EXT. THE CASTLE - BATTLEMENTS

Vlas bursts out onto the battlements. Marius and Lucian following close behind. Vlas peers over the battlements. He sees three dozen villagers scaling the walls like lizards. In the darkness their eyes seem to burn with a FIERY RED GLOW.

Vlas drops a blazing torch over the side. As it plummets past the villagers it illuminates them for an instant, and we see their true forms. No longer trying to hide their identities, we see the villagers for what they really are - what Cristofor had glimpsed earlier - the ancient retainers of Dracul. Over 150 years old, their withered skin is pulled tight over the skeletal frames. But they are driven on by an unnatural, devilish energy.

From now on, they will be known as what they truly are - Dracul'a's UNDEAD FAMILIARS.

Vlas fixes Lucian and Marius with a steely glare --

VLAS

None shall pass.

Lucian and Marius nod --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCIAN
None shall pass.

MARIUS
None shall pass.

Behind them, the sky is starting to lighten with a pre-dawn glow.

INT. THE CASTLE - LABYRINTH

Simon makes his way through an endless maze of rough hewn corridors. The only illumination his flickering torch. Suddenly a DARK SILHOUETTE moves between Simon and THE CAMERA. Startled, Simon turns, but whatever it was has gone.

Simon tightens his grip on his sword, as it slowly dawns on him, that perhaps the Hunter has become the Hunted.

EXT. THE CASTLE - BATTLEMENTS

Vlas, Marius and Lucian cast rocks down onto the Undead Familiars as they clamber up the sheer walls of the castle. A few of the rocks hit, smashing bones and dislodging the Undead. The Familiars plummet hundreds of feet to their doom.

But there are just too many of them.

Vlas grips his sword tightly as the skeletal Undead crest the battlements and the fighting becomes hand to hand.

VLAS
NONE SHALL PASS!

INT. THE CASTLE - DRACUL'A'S CHAMBER

At last we see Dracul'a's inner sanctum.

Once this place was part of the forest and open to the sky - a mountain gully with steep sides. But Dracul'a has constructed his castle on top of it. Sealing the gully in forever and creating a vast man made cave.

Denied access to the life giving sun, all the vegetation here is long since dead. PETRIFIED TREES rise out of the earth. Their dead branches reaching up to the vaulted foundations of the castle far above.

As Simon wanders through this rotting wonderland, he sees an ANCIENT STONE CIRCLE amongst the lifeless trees - the place of Dracul'a's conversion. Dracul'a has constructed his fortress on the very root of his power.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And at the heart of the stone circle, filled with earth, a
STONE SARCOPHAGUS - Dracul'a's resting place.

EXT. THE CASTLE - BATTLEMENTS

The fighting is brutal. Lucian is thrown from the
battlements by a mob of Familiars. He plunges to his fate
far below.

Vlas cleaves an enemy CLEAN IN HALF. But there are another
five to take his place.

Marius is dragged under by a snarling pack of Familiars.
Tearing claws and razor sharp teeth RIP HIM APART.

VLAS fights on.

But now he is alone.

INT. THE CASTLE - DRACUL'A'S CHAMBER

Simon approaches the Sarcophagus with trepidation. Inside,
lies Dracul'a. Eyes wide open, fixed on his nemesis.

DRACUL'A
You would kill me now? While I am
weak ... defenceless.

But Simon doesn't intend to debate it. He raises his sword,
ready to strike.

AURICA (O.S.)
No. Please.

Aurica emerges from behind one of the standing stones. Her
eyes are glazed - pupils dilated -

AURICA (CONT'D)
Spare him.

SIMON
No.

And he drives his blade into the sarcophagus. But Dracul'a
is no longer there. Simon turns and Dracul'a is standing
right beside him!

A CRUSHING BLOW sends Simon flying. He IMPACTS with one of
the standing stones and crumples to the ground. As Dracul'a
approaches, Simon raises his crucifix in defence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRACUL'A

(laughs)

Your symbols of power have no use here.

Dracul'a swats the crucifix aside. It falls to the ground.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

This is a sacred place. Within this circle your God has no dominion.

But as Dracul'a gloats, Simon strikes like a snake. His blade cutting through Dracul'a's throat. The vampire staggers backwards as Simon readies the killer blow. He swings, but the blade is CAUGHT.

PAN from the hand holding the blade to reveal --

CRISTOFOR! His hair and face muddled. His clothes in tatters. His fingers dirty and broken - from digging himself out of his own grave.

CRISTOFOR

Brother ...

But there is none of Simon's brother left here - Cristofor's humanity is gone completely. He is a fully fledged VAMPIRE. Cristofor twists his brother's hand and the blade falls to the ground.

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)

A blade through the heart only works if you leave it in there.

CLOSE ON DRACUL'A --

Holding his throat -- where Simon had cut him. THE WOUND BEGINS TO HEAL.

CLOSE ON AURICA --

Watching the two brothers fight to the death. Great sadness in her eyes. But powerless to help.

Dracul'a puts his arm around her --

DRACUL'A

(comforting)

Come away ... We should leave the brothers to their dance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ON THE BROTHERS --

As Cristofor spins Simon around and forces him to his knees.

CRISTOFOR

I heard your words ... through the
Earth.

He forces his FANGS around his brother's throat.

CRISTOFOR (CONT'D)

But I fear you will see our parents
before I.

CLOSE ON SIMON --

He is not afraid. He stares at his brother calmly. Sadly.

SIMON

I will avenge you brother.

Cristofor looks confused for a moment and then CONVULSES violently. He looks down to see that Simon has thrust a CROSSBOW BOLT into his chest. Opening up the old wound - PIERCING HIS HEART.

Cristofor takes one last look at his brother.

Then sinks to the ground. Dead.

ANGLE ON THE CRUCIFIX --

As Simon picks it up.

CLOSE ON SIMON --

As he looks up. Eyes filled with grief, but also BLAZING with anger.

He sees Dracul'a walking away from him. His arm around Aurica.

Simon unfurls his CHAIN WHIP and lashes out. He catches Dracul'a around the shoulder. Simon hauls with all his might - pulling Dracul'a clean off his feet. He flies backwards, crashing to the ground before Simon.

Furious, Dracul'a leaps to the attack. Pummeling Simon with a series of mighty blows. Driving him back. Punishing him relentlessly. Until eventually Simon can take no more. Bloodied and broken, he holds up the crucifix again. A last feeble defence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DRACUL'A

(laughs)

That is of no use here.

But now it is Simon's turn to SMILE. The unexpected gesture causes Dracul'a to hesitate for a moment. With growing realization he looks around. To his horror, he realizes that he is OUTSIDE the stone circle.

Simon has tricked him.

And in an instant, Simon is upon his foe. Pressing the Crucifix to Dracul'a forehead. The vampire tries to fend it off, but when he touches the crucifix with his hands, they too blister and burn.

Pressing his advantage, Simon readies his sword. Seeing the inevitable, Dracul'a cries out --

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

NO!

But Simon plunges the blade deep into Dracul'a's chest.

Mortally wounded, the vampire still won't die. He locks his eyes with those of Simon --

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

You will not take her from me ...

Grasping the hilt of the sword he BREAKS THE BLADE IN TWO!! Most of the blade is still embedded in Dracul'a, but now he holds the hilt and two inches of jagged blade in his hands.

He plunges the remains of the sword into Simon.

Now the two are locked together in an embrace of death. And it is Simon who falls to his knees first. He is just a mortal, with a mortal's strength. All he can do is watch as Dracul'a, still on his feet, turns away and staggers back to the protection of the stone circle.

Every step is agony, but Dracul'a is going to make it. He is going to live. He grasps the blade, and inch by agonizing inch, he begins to PULL it from his chest.

Dracul'a is just two steps away from the circle, and safety, when Aurica takes him in her arms --

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

My love ... Help me ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Aurica grasps the blade.

Her eyes never leave those of Dracul'a, as slowly, gently, she begins to slide the blade back INTO his chest. There is nothing vicious or ugly about her actions. They are almost loving and tender.

Putting her love to rest. Giving him peace.

DRACUL'A (CONT'D)

What have you done?

He looks at her with pleading eyes.

AURICA

(tender)

For you the wait is over.

And Dracul'a dies in her arms.

She holds him for a long moment, then slowly, gently lays his head to rest. As Dracul'a's head touches the ground, he has returned to the beautiful, noble warrior he once was.

EXT. THE CASTLE - BATTLEMENTS

Vlas makes his last stand. Vastly outnumbered, moments from death. But he is unbowed. He will have a warrior's end.

And then, without warning, the Familiars begin to withdraw. Melting back into the shadows.

And after a moment Vlas is left alone.

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL

Simon staggers to the top of the spiral stairs with Aurica's assistance. He is mortally wounded.

SIMON

(fighting for breath)

No further. This is far enough.

In the distance, the giant bell begins to toll as the sun crests the mountains. Simon looks up at the high windows. Shafts of sunlight are starting to filter through them.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I would see the sun one last time.

Simon sinks to the ground. Aurica cradles his head in her hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VLAS (O.S.)
My Lord.

SIMON
Vlas.

The Moor hurries over to his dying Lord.

SIMON (CONT'D)
(halting - in great pain)
I fear this has been our last
battle.

VLAS
At least it was a good one.

Simon forces a smile. Grips the hand of his friend.

SIMON
It was.

And with his last, dying breath he turns to Aurica --

SIMON (CONT'D)
I wish we had more time ...

AURICA
Do not worry my love ...

His eyes begin to dim.

AURICA (CONT'D)
... I will wait for you.

These are the last words he hears. Simon is dead.

AURICA (CONT'D)
(softly)
I will wait.

There are tears in Vlas' eyes. But suddenly he turns. Sword
in hand. THE FAMILIARS HAVE RETURNED!

Now in the guise of the villagers once more, two dozen
Familiars stand silently behind Vlas. So close they could
reach out and touch him. But they do not.

Mayor Patrescu is the first to kneel. The rest of the
villagers follow suit, until every one of them is kneeling,
heads bent in supplication.

CLOSE ON VLAS --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Confused. He glances at Aurica who is now standing.

A patch of sunlight creeps across the floor and Aurica takes a step back to avoid it. And slowly confusion turns to horror, as Vlas pieces together the truth.

He realizes that the Villagers/Familiars are kneeling before Aurica. Simon did not slay Dracul'a in time, and Aurica has turned.

She is their new Lord.

CLOSE ON AURICA --

Gazing at Vlas. Her intentions unclear.

HARD CUT-TO:

EXT. THE CASTLE SUNRISE.

As the sun spills around the fortress, THE CAMERA begins to PULL BACK. As it does, the sun accelerates - racing through the sky - a whole day passing in seconds. The moon follows, and a heartbeat later the sun once more.

Time passes rapidly.

Day turns to Night. Winter to Spring. Summer to Fall.

As the Camera continues to Pull Back, the years fall away and the Castle begins to weather, then crumble.

SUPER --

Carpathian Mountains - Romania - Now

ARIEL SHOT --

A Mercedes Bus approaches the castle and TOURISTS spill out.

EXT/INT. THE CASTLE/VILLAGE DAY.

The castle and village are now clearly abandoned.

This place has become a Mecca for tourism. Souvenir stalls everywhere.

A MONTAGE shows us all the locations of our story. The village square, the grand hall, the castle battlements. All sanitized for the tourist Dollar and Yen.

INT. THE CASTLE - GRAND HALL

Tourists with headphones take audio tours. Others snap digital stills.

HIGH ANGLE --

Showing the Dragon Mosaic on the floor. Tourists cross it like tiny ants.

SLOWLY WE
DISSOLVE TO:

AN IDENTICAL MOSAIC --

Fashioned in the same black and red colors. But this one is inlaid into a brand new marble floor. WIDEN to reveal --

INT. THE TOWER SUNSET.

A magnificent structure that shames I.M. PEI. Newly constructed in Manhattan, close to Ground Zero. A thoroughly modern fortress of glass and steel. If you are quick, you will notice Familiars dressed as Security Guards, Cleaners and Office Staff.

Over hidden speakers, a discreet bell tolls three times.

INT. THE TOWER - PENTHOUSE SUNSET.

An elevator opens and an ELEGANT FIGURE steps into the luxurious penthouse. We follow the Figure as he walks through the vast space. Views of Manhattan through every window.

Up ahead is a balcony overlooking the river far below. Standing there is a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

ELEGANT FIGURE
Stock reports, bond rates and
currency fluctuations.

As he places the information on a glass table, the Elegant Figure is revealed to be Vlas. Impeccably dressed in a \$5,000 suit - the armor of the modern business warrior.

VLAS
What do you plan for tonight?

The Beautiful Woman turns. It is Aurica. More stunning than ever, but a haunted look in her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AURICA

To wait. Vlas. As always.

She turns back to the last remains of the sunset. Still waiting for her love's return.

AURICA (CONT'D)

To wait.

EXT. THE TOWER SUNSET.

AN ARIEL SHOT pulls away from Aurica on her balcony to reveal her modern Castle in all its glory. Outlined against the crimson sky.

And then, never once losing sight of Aurica, we drift away across the timeless Manhattan skyline.

The wait continues.

Crystal Sky